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ABSTRACT

This document comprises the 12 issues for 1999 of the "Child Support Report," which explores problems related to child support enforcement, reports on federal and state government child support enforcement initiatives, and summarizes research related to child support. Editorials and information on events and conferences of interest and funding opportunities are featured regularly. Major topics include: (1) Kentucky's Investigator Pilot Project, and early findings of the effect of child support and self-sufficiency programs in Washington state (January); (2) the National Council of State Child Support Enforcement Administrators, and Operation Search and Seize in Georgia (February); (3) increasing interstate collections, and reducing welfare costs and dependency (March); (4) Ad Council campaign aimed at fathers, and barriers to applying for child support services (April); (5) Texas' Paternity Opportunity Program, and implementing self-assessment of state child support enforcement programs (May); (6) the Georgia Fatherhood Initiative to help low-income men pay support, and information exchange by Internet (June); (7) Colorado efforts to serve prisoners with child support obligations, and a California court ruling concerning child support defendants and appointed counsel (July); (8) the role of state courts in child support enforcement, and new safeguards for family violence victims (August); Rhode Island's electronic funds transfer/electronic data interchange (EFT/EDI) for child support funds, and Mississippi's Responsible Fatherhood Initiative (September); (10) connecting fathers, families, and communities in Washington state, and Minnesota's project to help low-income fathers (October); (11) the National Legislators' Symposium on Child Support, and a survey of Food Stamp Program participants (November); and (12) Year 2000 preparations of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, and new federal rules to enforce health care coverage in child support orders (December). (HTH)

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CHILD SUPPORT REPORT, 1999

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 1, January 1999

Helping Dads Be Fans of Their Kids

By: Anne Berkeley

Whether it's playing catch, reading a story, doing homework, or simply listening, fathers need to know that it's critical to be a fan of their kids and that it's the most important position they can play.

The Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program has teamed up with the Colorado Rockies baseball team, Children's Hospital, the Governor's Responsible Fatherhood Initiative, Fox Sports Rocky Mountain, the Rocky Mountain News, and USWEST to help fathers be their kids' biggest fans.

"Be A Fan of Your Kid" is a public service campaign designed to foster positive fathering skills. Started on Father's Day 1998, it includes printed ads in the Rocky Mountain News, public service announcements on Fox Sports Rocky Mountain, and an Internet site (www.BeAFanofYourKid.org).

The campaign is targeted to young fathers and provides simple, direct tips to them: Be active in raising your children; support your kids emotionally; praise them for the little things they do; show them your interest, respect and love.

An essay contest in the Rocky Mountain News gave kids a chance to say why their dad is their biggest fan. More than 130 entries were received. The winner, 9-year-old Molly Weber, received a trip for two to San Diego to see the Rockies take on the Padres (see sidebar for an excerpt from Molly's letter).

The second place winner, 8-year-old Patricia Shoemaker ("He took me to ballet even when it was mostly moms there, lets me help in his garden, and tells me how lucky he is to have me."), received four tickets and the opportunity

Continued on page 6, "Rockies."

First Prize: Molly Weber, 9 years old

". . . [my dad] coached all my teams in soccer softball basketball and T-ball too. . . He read to me every night until I learned to read and now I read to him. He keeps pictures of me in his wallet. He takes me fishing. I draw pictures he hangs on the wall at work. He takes me on walks in the hardware store and tells me about what different tools do. We make snowmen. We fly our kites together when it is windy out. Now I have a brother and My Dad has room for both of us." ☐

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U.S. Population Becoming More Diverse

The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse. In recent years, Hispanics and minority racial groups—nonHispanic blacks, Asians, and American Indians—have each grown faster than the population as a whole. In 1970 these groups together represented only 16 percent of the population. By 1998 this share had increased to 27 percent. Assuming current trends continue, the Bureau of the Census projects that these groups will account for almost half of the U.S. population by 2050. Although such projections are necessarily imprecise, they do indicate that the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States will grow substantially in the next century.

Immigration has played a major role in increasing diversity of the population by contributing to the rapid growth of the Asian and Hispanic populations since the 1960s. In 1997, 38 percent of the Hispanic population and 61 percent of the Asian population were foreign-born, compared with 8 percent of the white population, 6 percent of the black population, and 6 percent of the American Indian population.

While immigration of Asians and Hispanics has increased, population growth has slowed dramatically for the nation as a whole, largely due to declining fertility rates among nonHispanic blacks and nonHispanic whites. As a result of this declining fertility, the nonHispanic white share of the population has fallen since 1970, and the nonHispanic black share of the population has increased only slightly.

Household structure is a demographic characteristic with important effects on social and economic status. Poverty rates are highest among children, and the growth of child poverty has often been associated with the rising share of single-parent families. Since 1970 the fraction of families maintained by a single parent has increased for all groups and is highest among blacks (38 percent), American Indians (26 percent), and Hispanics (26 percent). □

Source: "Changing America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin," *By the Council of Economic Advisers for the President's Initiative on Race, September, 1998.*

Single Father Growth Outpaces Single Mother Growth

While the number of single mothers (9.8 million) has remained constant over the past three years, the number of single fathers has grown 25 percent, from 1.7 million in 1995 to 2.1 million in 1998, according to the Census Bureau's recently released report, "Household and Family Characteristics: March 1998 (Update)." A household is defined as a person or group of persons who live in a housing unit; a family is defined as a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder, the person in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented) living together and related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Men now comprise one-sixth of the nation's 11.9 million single parents.

Men now comprise one-sixth of the nation's 11.9 million single parents.

Other highlights include:

- Of the 102.5 million households in the U.S., 69 percent are family households. The share of family households fell 10 percentage points between 1970 and 1990 (from 81 percent to 71 percent) but has dropped only 2 percentage points since;
- About half (49 percent) of family households contain children under 18, down from 56 percent in 1970;
- The growth of one-parent families is slowing. They comprise 27 percent of family households with children, up from 24 percent in 1990 and 11 percent in 1970;
- Nearly 22 million adult (ages 18 or older) sons and daughters live in a home maintained by one or both parents, up from 15 million in 1970; and
- The average U.S. family household consists of 3.18 people, down from 3.58 in 1970 but unchanged from 1990. Hispanic families are larger, with an average of 3.92 members, than either African American or nonHispanic White families, which average 3.42 and 3.02 members, respectively. □

Source: Bureau of the Census, March 1998 Current Population Survey.

Kentucky's Investigator Pilot Project

By: Kathy Adams

Kentucky child support director Steve Veno.

Kentucky's Investigator Pilot Project solves problems with service of process and the location of hidden assets of noncustodial parents by collaborating with the Attorney General's Office. An idea first advanced by Kentucky child support director Steven P. Veno, the project began in April, 1998, through a special contract between Kentucky's Division of Child Support Enforcement and the Office of the Attorney General.

"There are specific areas of the Commonwealth," Mr. Veno said, "that experience problems with service of process compared to other criminal processes. Working within the cultural differences between Kentucky's urban and rural areas, we have been able to implement a very successful project to address these challenges."

Two sites, one in Western and one in Eastern Kentucky, were selected for the pilot and the Attorney General hired an investigator for each site. The investigators work closely with state child support staff and local officials to serve child support summonses and warrants, many of which had gone unserved for years. Investigators also look into cases in which there may be reason to believe that a noncustodial parent's income or assets are questionable.

Less than a year into the project, more than 150 families have benefited from it, and there are already plans for expansion to other areas of the state. Much of the success can be attributed to the investigators' special skills, knowledge, and sensitivity to local culture.

In the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, for example, knowledge of the culture, in addition to a good relationship with law enforcement authorities, has been important to identifying and locating noncustodial parents and their hidden assets. Especially in very rural areas, kinship ties run deep, and it's often who you know that gets things done.

In Western Kentucky, the investigator's military and private investigator background has proven to be a strength especially in locating noncustodial parents who may be trying to avoid being served. After working closely with local law enforcement officers and educating them about the importance of child support, that investigator has been appointed as a special bailiff in each of the counties he serves and has complete service of process authority.

"Working within the cultural differences between Kentucky's urban and rural areas, we have been able to implement a very successful project."

.....Kentucky child support director Steve Veno.

While it may be too early to measure the increase in collections brought about by the Investigator Pilot, there is little doubt among those familiar with the Project that positive results are being felt by many children and families. One indicator is the activity on cases with obstacles that previously seemed insurmountable. Another is the gratitude being expressed by many custodial parents. As one of them told an investigator, "This morning my children were able to have sausage with their eggs and a choice of milk or juice, thanks to what you were able to do."

For more information contact Kathy Adams at (502) 564-2285 X 406.□

Kathy Adams is the Public Awareness Coordinator for Kentucky's Cabinet for Families and Children, Division of Child Support.

Research

Early Findings of the Effect of Child Support and Self-Sufficiency Programs in Washington State on Reducing Direct Support Public Costs

By: Carl Formoso

Preliminary work in Washington State on child support enforcement (CSE) cost avoidance through reduced custodial parent welfare use has followed two groups of people:

- all adults who used welfare in Washington State in the 4th quarter, 1993; and
- all adults who used welfare in Washington State in the 4th quarter, 1995.

These early findings suggest that investments to improve CSE collections will pay off both directly, through collections income, and indirectly through reduced costs of welfare use.

We find a significant cost avoidance which builds over time associated with good CSE collections.

Outcomes to lst quarter, 1997, in terms of welfare use and earnings were adjusted by statistical techniques for customer characteristics, history, and location. Adjustments also were made for customers accessing State programs which promote self-sufficiency, although at this point only the JOBS Program (Job Opportunity and Basic Skills Program) could be included. The intention was to isolate the impact of CSE collections from other factors that influence reduced use of welfare.

In comparing the costs of welfare use for CSE custodial parents with *good collections* with costs for CSE custodial parents with poor collections, we find a significant cost avoidance which builds over time associated with good CSE collections. (For our purposes, *good collections* are defined as a monthly order amount of more than $0 and total arrears of less than twice the monthly order amount.)

We also find cost avoidance associated with the JOBS program. (Association with JOBS is defined as entry into JOBS prior to the quarter of group selection.) The 1995 group showed a positive interaction between CSE and JOBS, with the cost avoidance for participation in both programs being greater than the sum of cost avoidance for the programs separately. No interaction between CSE and JOBS was observed with the 1993 group.

Analyses of duration of spells on or off welfare indicate the primary effect of good CSE collections to be a reduction of recidivism rates.

Analyses of duration of spells on or off welfare indicate the primary effect of good CSE collections to be a reduction of recidivism rates, with little or no effect on welfare exits. The JOBS program, on the other hand, shows a strong effect in increasing welfare exit rates but little or no effect on recidivism.

If you would like more information about this study, contact Carl Formoso at (360) 664-5090. □

Carl Formoso is Research and Development Manager in Washington State's Division of Child Support.

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Family Visitation Centers Open in Delaware

By: Cynthia B. Lovell

DHSS Secretary Gregg C. Sylvester, Chief Judge of the Family Court Vincent J. Poppit, State Senator Patricia M. Blevins, State Senator Thurman Adams with grandson, and Governor Thomas R. Carper open Delaware's Georgetown Family Visitation Center.

Two new Family Visitation Centers, one in Dover and another in Georgetown, Delaware, were opened in October, 1998. The first Family Visitation Centers in Delaware were established in 1995 to address custody and visitation issues in families with a history of domestic violence. Opening ceremonies in Dover and Georgetown were attended by Governor Thomas R. Carper and State Senator Patricia M. Blevins, as well as other dignitaries, including the State's child support director Karryl Hubbard.

"Family Visitation Centers provide a safe environment in which families with a history of domestic violence can renew or continue a relationship with their children."

.....Delaware child support director Karryl Hubbard

"Family Visitation Centers," said Ms. Hubbard, "provide a safe environment in which families with a history of domestic violence can renew or continue a relationship with their children."

The Centers provide two types of services, depending on the history of the family: supervised exchange of children for off-site visitation and monitored on-site visitation. Exchange of children for off-site visitation occurs at the visitation centers, allowing children an opportunity to have visitation without any contact between the parents themselves.

"Children benefit from having both parents in their lives."

.....Delaware Governor Thomas R. Carper

In the 12-month period ending 6/30/98 more than 150 Delaware families participated in the family visitation and exchange program. Staff supervised 517 exchanges of children for off-site visitation and monitored 1,255 on-site visitations.

"These centers strengthen the family circle," Governor Carper said in his opening ceremony remarks, "and we know from research that children benefit from having both parents in their lives."

Through funding provided by DHHS/OCSE Access and Visitation Grants, the Department of Justice Victims of Crime Act, and the Delaware Health and Social Services Division of State Service Centers, which also administers the project, the Family Visitation Centers provide convenient and flexible visitation hours on weekends and holidays.

Services are available statewide, by appointment, in Newark, Dover, Milford, and Georgetown. Participant fees are based on a sliding scale, but victims of domestic violence are not assessed fees.

For more information contact Delaware's Division of State Service Centers at (302) 577-4961.□

Cynthia Lovell is a Social Service Senior Administrator in Delaware's Division of State Service Centers.

Penalty Work Group Completes Report

By: Tom Killmurray

The Social Security Act specifically requires a penalty for poor performance in establishing paternities, as well as other performance penalties. A workgroup of state and federal representatives recently issued recommendations to the Commissioner of OCSE on a system of penalties for states that perform poorly. The workgroup's recommendations will be considered when OCSE writes proposed regulations on penalties in the Spring of 1999. As required, the resulting Notice of Proposed Rule Making will afford a comment period.

What aspects of the child support program are proposed for penalties? Extremely poor performance in establishing paternities and establishing child support orders, and low amounts of collections on current support will garner a penalty. The workgroup aimed for consistency with P.L. 105-200, the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998, which enacts the new system to become effective in fiscal year 2000. Penalties will be assessed using the same measures contained in P.L. 105-200. (*While this article focuses on penalties, it should be kept in mind that states will earn incentive payments for high levels of performance.*)

The performance standards for paternity establishment are set by statute. A penalty of 1 percent of a state's TANF funds is incurred when a required increase is not met. For example, a state with a 73 percent Paternity Establishment Percentage and no increase, or an increase of less than 3 percentage points over the previous year, will be penalized.

If a state performed below 40 percent on its order establishment rate and had an increase of less than 5 percentage points (or no increase) over the previous year, a penalty of 1 percent of the state's TANF funds is incurred. If a state performed below 35 percent on its current support collection rate, and had an increase of less than 5 percentage points (or no increase) over the previous year, a penalty of 1 percent of the state's TANF funds is incurred.

The work group recommends that the first penalties be assessed in fiscal year 2002, with states having a statutory corrective action period of one year. To learn more about the details of the workgroup's recommended penalty system, see Dear Colleague Letter 98-93.□

Tom Killmurray is a Program Analyst in OCSE's Division of Policy and Programs.

More Tribal Planning Grants

In addition to and separately from previously announced OCSE grants to states and tribal organizations to strengthen their child support enforcement programs (see November '98 *CSR*), OCSE has awarded Tribal Planning Grants to:

- The Central Council, Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, in the amount of $60,314; and
- The Lac du Flambeau, Band of Lake Superior (Wisconsin) Chippewa Indians, in the amount of $44,100.

The funds, which will support planning by the Tribes to operate their own child support programs, are for the period from September 30, 1998 through February 29, 2000. The Project Officer is Lucille Dawson, OCSE's Native American Liaison Officer. For further information, contact Lucille at (202) 401-5437.□

Announcement

OCSE is seeking ways to increase participation of custodial and noncustodial parents in Welfare-to-Work, a voluntary program administered by the Department of Labor.

If you know of successful practices that can be used to publicize the program, or if you have ideas about how to motivate parents to become involved, we would like to hear from you. Please respond to Beverly Bunn at (202) 401-5240, or by email: bbunn@ocse.dsla@acf.wdc.□

Rockies

Continued from first page

to throw out the first pitch to her grandfather at the Colorado Rockies home game against the Milwaukee Brewers.

The third place winner, 12 year old Sean Solano ("A lot of time my dad is in pain at night and doesn't sleep very many hours, but he's still there for me and my family every minute of the day.") received four tickets for seats behind the dugout to a Rockies home game.

To read the winning essays in their entirety, check out the web site at www.BeAFanofYourKid.org. For more information about "Be A Fan of Your Kid", call Anne Berkeley at (303) 839-5429.□

Anne Berkeley is a Program Assistant in Colorado's Child Support Enforcement Program.

1999 Conference Calendar

The Calendar is printed quarterly in *CSR*: in January, April, July, and October. If you are planning a meeting or conference and would like it to be included in the Calendar, please call OCSE's Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292 or fax her at (202) 401-5559. The Calendar is accessible through the Federal OCSE web site under the "News" section: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/new.htm. Select "Calendar of Events."

February

1-3 *NCSEA 12th Mid-Year Policy Forum and Conference,* Wyndham Hotel, Washington, DC, Heather Tonks (202) 624-8180.

16-19 *California Family Support Council Annual Training Conference,* Riviera Resort & Racquet Club, Palm Springs, CA, Noanne St. Jean (209) 582-3211 X 2403.

March

3-5 *Louisiana CSE Association Annual Training Conference,* Holiday Inn Financial Plaza, Shreveport, LA, Michael D. Brown (225) 342-4780.

April

6-8 *Child Support Enforcement Systems Workshop,* Grand Hyatt Hotel, Washington, DC, Linda Deimeke (202) 401-5439.

19-21 *Child Support Enforcement Systems Workshop,* Adams Mark Hotel, St. Louis, MO, Linda Deimeke (202) 401-5439.

26-28 *Child Support Enforcement Systems Workshop,* Crown Plaza Hotel, Phoenix, AZ, Linda Deimeke (202) 401-5439.

May

10-13 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting,* Hyatt Regency Monterey, Monterey, CA, Noanne St. Jean (209) 582-3211 X 2403.

12-14 *North Carolina Council Conference,* Seatrail Plantation & Gold Resort, Brunswick County, NC, Barry Miller (919) 571-4114.

16-21 *Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association Conference,* Wyndham Resort and Spa, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Vernon Drew (301) 587-9622.

June

16-18 *"Connecting Fathers, Families, & Communities: Dads Make a Difference,"* Green River Community College, Auburn, WA, Cheryl Reed (360) 664-5445.

July

6-8 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting,* Catamaran, San Diego, CA, Noanne St. Jean (209) 582-3211 X 2403.

August

8-12 *NCSEA 48th Annual Conference & Exposition,* Palmer House Hilton & Towers, Chicago, IL, Heather Tonks. □

A Summary of OCSE Technical Assistance and Training: 1998

By: Myles Schlank

During 1998, OCSE's Division of Technical Assistance and Training provided many products meant to help the states' staff achieve program goals. Examples include:

- *Three conferences which covered New Hire, Case Registries, UIFSA, Financial Institution Data Matches, Administrative Quick Enforcement, EFT/EDT Tax Offset, and the Financial Distribution Test Deck;*
- Meetings and conferences on CSENet and two ACF Systems User Group meetings to give state staff a forum to discuss their experiences in implementing the requirements of the Family Support Act and welfare reform;
- *A booklet of state "Best Practices" (see http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/rpt/bp98.htm);*
- Training packages and two Action Transmittals (ATs 98-03 and 98-05) on interstate case processing/UIFSA;
- *Workshops and an AT (98-12) on the new state self-assessment requirement;*
- A videotape and information packet for members of the judiciary and court systems on the child support requirements of welfare reform;
- *Information kits on the "ABCs of Child Support: An Employer Overview" and a "Payroll Manager's Guide;" and*
- An electronic system to provide federal, state, tribal, and local CSE organizations with a search function and quick access to resource materials, model practices and forms (NECSRS-National Electronic Child Support Resource System–see http://ocse.acf.dhhs.gov/necsrspub/.

If you would like more information about OCSE's training and technical assistance activities, call Myles Schlank at (202) 401-9329. □

Myles Schlank is Chief of the Technical Assistance Branch in OCSE's Division of State and Local Assistance.

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Child Support Report

Notice of International Meeting

We understand that the Department of State has scheduled a meeting of a study group on international family support enforcement of the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Private International Law for Friday, January 29, 1999.

The purpose is to assist the United States delegation to the Hague Conference on Private International Law special session, to be held in April, 1999. A public notice of the meeting will be published in the Federal Register.

Additional information may be obtained from Stephen Grant (OCSE, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Aerospace Bldg, Washington, DC 20447, phone (202) 260-5943, email sgrant@acf.dhhs.gov); or Gloria DeHart (Office of the Assistant Legal Advisor/PIL, U.S. Department of State,50 Fremont St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94101-3648, phone (415) 356-6187).

For copies of the Federal Register notice or the documents to be discussed at the meeting, or for information about attending the meeting, contact Rosalia Gonzales at (202) 776-8420.

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 2, February 1999

The National Council of State Child Support Enforcement Administrators

An Interview with Michigan's Wally Dutkowski

Wally Dutkowski

Leadership training and a mentoring program: two new approaches that NCSCSEA is taking to help new IV-D directors prepare for their responsibilities.

On January 12, *CSR* spoke with Wallace Dutkowski, President of the National Council of State Child Support Enforcement Administrators (NCSCSEA) and director of Michigan's Office of Child Support.

CSR: *Tell us something about the purpose of NCSCSEA.*

WD: The Council is a relatively informal association of child support directors—quite small in comparison to other national organizations. Membership is limited to current directors, so the number is always 54. The purpose is pretty straightforward: to give us—the state directors—an opportunity to interact with our peers, meet with each other, trade views and ideas on the issues we live with every day, and provide support and encouragement to one another. The Council was organized in the late 1970s as a mechanism for state directors to communicate with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, as well as with each other. We meet three times a year, including an annual conference, have periodic conference calls, and talk by phone with each other on a regular basis.

CSR: *How would you assess the organization's current health?*

WD: I'd say it's good, but everybody's tired from the hectic pace of dealing with welfare reform issues over the past couple of years. This has been a very busy group, very committed to making the changes needed to improve the program.

CSR: *Is there a sense that now that changes have been made and deadlines met, it's time for a well-earned rest . . .*

OTG93

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WD: Not at all. We're just as busy this year as last. Child support directors as a group tend to embrace change. If you look at the history of the program, it's really a history of constant change. And that's positive—good for the program—as long as you're dealing with it in a way that makes sense and is doable.

CSR: *And if you're not . . .*

WD: Well, we've got a real challenge on our hands right now with distribution—the families first issue. Here we're looking at something that is extremely complicated to begin with, and the challenge is to keep control of it, make the changes that are needed but keep it workable, keep it something that everyone can understand and deal with.

CSR: *As President, what would you like to achieve with NCSCSEA this year?*

WD: I want the organization to continue to be an important player in discussions of national child support enforcement issues and in decisions that are made. Many of our child support directors are relatively new, and we need to make sure that they have a good understanding of the issues and of what's at stake for the program.

CSR: *The turnover rate of IV-D directors seems to be around 25 or 30 percent a year . . .*

WD: That's an ongoing and serious issue for us. Part of it has to do with the political nature of the job, but there are aspects of it that better orientation and training could address.

CSR: *Do you have plans of that nature?*

WD: Yes, two things in particular. One is a leadership training course that OCSE is developing. The Council has been closely involved in identifying topics and content for the course, and we think this is going to be very useful in helping new child support directors prepare for their responsibilities. That's due to be field tested at our annual conference in Traverse City, Michigan, May 2 to 5, 1999. The other is an idea put forth by Mary Ann Wellbank, Montana's child support director. It's a kind of mentoring program, in which new directors would be paired in their first year with experienced directors of like-sized states. This would have obvious benefits for both participants and is something we probably should have started a long time ago. There's always been a certain amount of informal advising or counseling available to new directors, of course, but formalizing the relationship gives it much more meaning. We think it can help make new directors more confident in their ability to handle the numerous responsibilities they face each day, and it could also contribute in time to a reduction of the turnover rate.

CSR: *Obviously, there's a lot of stress in the job. Why would anyone want to be a IV-D director?*

WD: Well, it keeps your interest because it's difficult and complex. It's certainly never boring. We're always dealing with two things about which people resent any intervention: their children and their money. It's hard to satisfy everyone. Sometimes it's hard to satisfy anyone. Nevertheless, our program is critical to family financial security. With the changes in TANF, child support really is crucial as a safety net, and that places a core personal responsibility on us to do our best in every situation. As directors of state child support programs, we can make a difference, with the help of our staff, in the lives of children and families.

CSR: *Any other comments?*

WD: It's easier to make a difference when everyone pulls together, as our partnership with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement has shown over the past few years. The work done on GPRA and the incentives work group are only two of many examples I could cite. I give Judge Ross a lot of credit for this—for opening up communications and for being willing to share the load—but my hat is off to staff at all levels for their hard work and dedicated efforts on behalf of children and families.

CSR: *Thank you.* □

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Partners for Children: Massachusetts' Insurance Claim Intercept Program

By: Amy A. Pitter

Massachusetts' new Insurance Claim Payment Intercept Program (ICPIP) intercepts insurance payments using Internet datamatches. Developed by the State's Department of Revenue (DOR), Division of Insurance, and Massachusetts insurers, the program is a refinement of a more paper-oriented program that has generated close to $1 million in a small-scale pilot in its first six months. With the introduction of the ICPIP website, the reporting and lien criteria will not change, only the speed and efficiency of the match process.

The key to the datamatches on which this new enforcement program relies is the claimant's Social Security number.

Under a March, 1998, initiative (now codified in Massachusetts' law), insurance companies must report insurance payments of $500 or more made under policies written or processed in Massachusetts. (*The program does not include payments resulting from first-party claims, claims for damage to or loss of real property, payments under annuity contracts, disability payments, or dividend payments.*)

When this information shows that a claimant owes past-due child support and a child support lien has arisen, the insurance company must withhold funds from the insurance payment so that they can be applied to the claimant's child support debt.

The key to the datamatches on which this new enforcement program relies is the claimant's Social Security number. Massachusetts' law now requires claimants to provide this number or forego payment on the claim.

Massachusetts' experience suggests that the $500 floor for reporting has been a key element in the program's initial success. With such a low payment triggering a report, the volume of claims might be expected to overwhelm the matching and enforcement procedure.

In fact, Massachusetts' streamlined procedure allows DOR to reach beyond large settlements and recoup arrears as well from the smaller payments that make up the majority of claims.

With the ICPIP website, insurers will choose between two methods of exchanging information with DOR:

Amy Pitter

Instant Match Method: The insurer examines information made available by DOR via the World Wide Web to determine whether a claimant is subject to a child support lien. If the claimant is subject to a lien, the website will provide the insurer with a lien notice; or

Ten Business Day Wait Method: The insurer sends its claimant information to DOR on a weekly basis (by disk or, in limited circumstances, by fax), and DOR compares this information to its liens listing and provides the insurer with a lien notice for any matches.

When the insurer is ready to make a payment on a claim for which it has received a lien notice, the insurer distributes the settlement funds as follows:

- First, to any party providing a documented benefit or service in connection with the claim (attorney, repair shop, health care facility, medical doctor or other health care professional, etc.);
- Second, to DOR (up to the amount of the child support lien); and
- Third, to the claimant.

Insurers lacking information about amounts payable to parties providing benefits or services related to the claim may send the settlement of the claim to the claimant's attorney (if the claimant is represented by one) who is then responsible for distributing the funds as outlined above. When DOR receives its payment, it sends a notice of the intercept to the claimant and holds the funds for at least 45 days. This allows the claimant an opportunity to request a review of the intercept before the funds are distributed to the custodial parent or as a recoupment of welfare expenditures.

In developing this new program, DOR had to address the issue of how to ensure the confidentiality of the

Continued on page 4, "Massachusetts."

Collections Hit New Record

The Department of Health and Human Services has reported that the federal/state child support program's collections reached an estimated $14.4 billion for fiscal year 1998—an increase of 7 percent from 1997's $13.4 billion, and an increase of 80 percent since 1992 when $8 billion was collected. In addition, the Federal Government collected over $1.1 billion in delinquent child support from federal income tax refunds for tax year 1997. This amount was 3 percent higher than the previous year and a 70 percent increase since 1992. Collections were made on behalf of nearly 1.3 million families. "Each year that we break records, more children get the help they need and deserve," said HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala.

Collections reached an estimated $14.4 billion for fiscal year 1998— an increase of 80 percent since 1992 when $8 billion was collected.

Under the federal tax refund offset program, state child support agencies report names of parents who owe child support payments and the overdue amount to OCSE. These individuals are then notified in writing of the amount that will be withheld to cover their child support debt. That amount is then deducted from their income tax refund. The delinquency may also be reported to credit reporting agencies.

Parents whose children receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and whose unpaid child support totals $150 or more may have their federal income tax refunds withheld. For tax year 1997, refunds were withheld on behalf of over 869,000 families with children receiving TANF. Parents of children who do not receive TANF must owe at least $500 to have their refunds withheld. Nearly 428,000 nonTANF families benefited from the program this year.

"This has been another exciting year for the child support enforcement program," OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross said. "I congratulate all those dedicated workers in the nation's child support partnership who every day help put more food on the table and hope in the hearts of children."□

More Systems Workshops

In March 1998, OCSE hosted a series of workshops on the interrelationships of policy, programs, and systems. OCSE is planning a second series of workshops for April, 1999.

The workshops will follow a plenary session format whereby program, policy, and systems staff discuss various topics as a team. Roundtable discussions and "techie talks" will be held during lunch.

States are encouraged to send a mix of program, policy, and systems staff, as well as representatives from the courts.

OCSE will pay the hotel expenses for one attendee per state.

The workshops will take place as follows:

- **April 6-8,** Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC
- **April 19-21,** Adams Mark , St. Louis, MO
- **April 26-28,** Crown Plaza, Phoenix, AZ.

Preliminary agenda topics include: the impact of welfare reform system changes; state and federal case registries; state and national new hire directories; the use of new databases; one-state establishment and enforcement techniques; interstate case processing; financial institution data matches; federal offset programs; UIFSA; and data security.

For more information contact Mike Torpy at (202) 401-5510, or by e-mail at mtorpy@acf.dhhs.gov.□

Massachusetts

Continued from page 3.

child support information. Using sophisticated Internet technology, DOR has created a website accessible only to authorized insurers. When an insurer registers for either the Instant or the Ten Business Day Wait method, the insurer must sign a confidentiality statement promising to use the utmost care in safeguarding the information obtained from DOR, and all employees with access to this information must read the confidentiality statement. Insurers—or their employees—who misuse this information are liable for a fine of $1,000 per violation.

For more information about ICPIP, phone (617) 577-7200 X 30672.□

Amy Pitter is Deputy Commissioner, Child Support Enforcement Division, Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

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Operation Search and Seize in Georgia

By: David Lowe

Operation Search and Seize, the confiscation of license plates of nonpaying parents in Chatham County, Georgia, is the second phase of a plan designed by the District Attorney to motivate parents to pay their child support.

In a recent opinion, the Attorney General of Georgia stated that Georgia statutes on suspension of a drivers license for nonpayment of support (OCGA 19-11-9.3 and 19-6-28.1) also cover denial and suspension of an application for vehicle registration. "The provisions of the statutes," the Attorney General said, ". . . clearly include within the definition of license any registration that allows a person to operate a motor vehicle. . . . the department does have the power to request that the motor vehicle registration be suspended or that the application be denied."

As an enforcement tool, plate seizure is cost effective and can also be an effective deterrent to someone who may be thinking about not paying his or her support.

On receiving the Attorney General's opinion, the Chatham County District Attorney's Office planned a two-phase program designed to maximize the law to its fullest. Phase 1 denied license plates to violators. Phase II covered the seizure of plates and revocation of registrations and required coordination with the Georgia Motor Vehicle Division.

Phase I—Working with the Chatham County Tax Commissioner

Vehicles in Georgia are registered by the county tax commissioners. Child support enforcement developed a list of nonpaying parents. That list is compared with the tax commissioner's vehicle registration data base, and when a match is found a designator is placed on the vehicle registration file. The designator operates as a block when a noncustodial parent attempts to register a vehicle. On reviewing the file, the clerk informs the individual of the situation and provides a one-page information paper outlining the reason for the denial and steps to secure a release.

Phase II—Seizure and Revocation

Working with Georgia's Motor Vehicle Division, and in accordance with OCGA 19-11-9.3, Chatham County sends the noncustodial parent an intent to revoke letter. If no agreement is reached–or hearing requested–within 30 days, the license plate can be seized. A file consisting of vehicle registration information and data on the noncustodial parent is prepared and given to a district attorney investigator or police officer.

On locating the vehicle, the investigator removes the license plate and leaves a bright orange decal on the drivers side window which explains the seizure and provides information on how to secure a release. The registration is revoked until the noncustodial parent comes to an agreement with child support enforcement.

Phase II began on October 3, 1998, and received immediate attention, both in the community and nationwide. Numerous calls from out-of-State reporters and radio and TV stations, showed the program to be popular with the public. Recently, two noncustodial parents who, over a period of several years, had avoided 18 attempts to serve process came into the child support office and offered to cooperate immediately after their plates were seized. This is the case most of the time with Operation Search and Seize.

As an enforcement tool, plate seizure is cost effective and can also be an effective deterrent to someone who may be thinking about not paying his or her support.

For more information about Search and Seize, contact David Lowe at (912) 652-7400. □

David Lowe is the Director of the Chatham County Child Support Enforcement Office.

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The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute

By: Jerry Tello

The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute is the result of a collaborative effort undertaken by Bienvenidos Family Services, National Compadres Network, and Behavioral Assessment, Inc., all of which are engaged in evaluating and/or providing male responsibility and family support services to Latinos nationwide. The Institute's primary goal is to provide the Latino community with a voice at the national level in discussions regarding public policies and programs on fatherhood, "fragile families," and responsible parenting. A secondary goal is to address the multifaceted needs of Latino males, as these relate to positive involvement in the lives of their children, families, and community.

Under the leadership of its Executive Director, Jerry Tello, the Institute seeks to accomplish its goals by bringing together an integrated team of nationally recognized leaders in the fields of Latino health, education, social service, and community mobilization. Through research, training, and direct services the Institute furthers the development of Latino fathers as active and positive partners in nurturing, guiding, and educating their children.

By 2020, Latino children will make up 22 percent of the total number of children in the U.S. under the age of 18.

Latino families experience many of the same forces and strains as other American families, such as out-of wedlock births, difficulties in obtaining steady employment, high rates of school drop-out, and family poverty. These strains are aggravated by language problems that make it difficult for many Latino mothers and fathers to access mainstream child and family support services. Furthermore, high fertility rates and continued immigration fuel projections that by 2020 Latino children will make up 22 percent of the total number of children in the U.S. under the age of 18.

The Institute has already developed a number of activities to respond to these tendencies. Examples include:

Jerry Tello

- **Con Los Padres** ("With the Fathers"): a program that has achieved national recognition for its efforts and accomplishments in providing parenting classes, counseling, tutoring, job training, and mentoring services to young Latino fathers in order to assist them in assuming their parenting responsibilities;
- **Padres Con Cara Corazon** ("Father with a Heart"): a component of the "Partners for Fragile Families" demonstration project currently underway in Los Angeles County, this program helps Latino fathers to acquire positive parenting skills and establish healthy relationships with their children and families; and
- **Compadres Network:** a nationwide network of volunteers who serve as leaders, teachers, and mentors to Latino youth in preparation for adulthood.

All of these programs are based on the belief that "the first lesson of manhood is respect for women and children" and support a policy of zero tolerance for domestic violence.

Other efforts underway, or in planning, include:

- National Communication Center: a program to develop media campaigns that promote positive Latino father involvement with their children and families;
- Model Latino fatherhood programs, including a Latino Fatherhood Center with a variety of core services to help fathers and their families;
- An integrated team of nationally recognized experts to serve as trainers and advisors in program planning, development, and research;

Continued on page 7, "Latino."

Passport Denial Program Shows Early Promise

By: Roy Nix

As part of welfare reform, the Passport Denial Program became operational in June, 1998. This program allows states to deny a passport at application to anyone who owes more than $5,000 in back child support. When a state submits a case to OCSE with arrears that exceed $5,000, OCSE extracts the case and forwards it to the State Department for passport denial. These individuals are denied a passport at the time of application.

"Not only are we collecting money," said Jim Dingeldine, West Virginia's Chief Compliance Officer, "we are sending a message that we mean business."

The obligor is instructed to contact the state child support enforcement agency that certified the debt. Only the state certifying the debt can remove or withdraw the obligor from the passport denial process. If more than one state certified the obligor's debt, then all involved states must withdraw the obligor from the denial process before the passport can be issued.

The Passport Denial Program has been in operation for only six months, yet it is already beginning to show promising results. After a passport was denied, for example, West Virginia received a $4,000 lump sum payment from the noncustodial parent, who also agreed to pay $329 a month on the remaining arrears.

"Not only are we collecting money," said Jim Dingeldine, West Virginia's Chief Compliance Officer, "we are sending a message that we mean business."

The State of Louisiana collected over $49,000 on three cases. The most successful case, that of a noncustodial parent who had been living and working outside the U.S., netted almost $36,000.

Michigan was able to collect a substantial amount of money on a case that went back to 1982, with an arrearage of more than $20,000. The individual applied for a passport to take his current family on a trip out of the country. When he was denied, he immediately paid several thousand dollars up front and is making weekly payments on the remainder.

States have identified the following "lessons" from their experiences with the Passport Denial Program:

- Employment should be verified if an individual claims that his or her passport is needed to travel for work;
- Wage garnishments should be put in place whenever possible;
- Airline tickets should always be verified;
- Documentation should be obtained for claims of family emergencies;
- The full amount owed should be secured if possible. An individual may attempt to pay the minimum amount necessary to get his or her passport, but once it has been issued may choose not to pay the remainder; and
- States should keep in mind that once a passport is issued, there is no procedure in place to revoke it and it is effective for 10 years.

For more information about the Passport Denial Program, contact Roy Nix at (202) 401-5685.□

Roy Nix is Team Leader, Special Collections Unit, OCSE.

Latino

Continued from page 6.

- A national clearinghouse of bilingual/bicultural materials with information on Latino health, education, parenting, fatherhood, and family formation; and
- A national Latino fatherhood research and evaluation center to conduct comprehensive research and evaluation studies on Latino fathers, families, and children, and the effectiveness of specific program methodologies.

For further information, contact the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute at (213) 728-7770.□

Jerry Tello is Director of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute. With Ricardo Carrillo, he is editor of the recently published book, Family Violence and Men of Color: Healing the Wounded Spirit, *available from the Springer Publishing Company. He has been invited by the HHS fatherhood initiative to participate in activities to develop pregnancy prevention strategies for boys and young men and to strengthen Hispanic fathers involvement in their children's lives.*

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Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
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New From OCSE

The Government Printing Office (GPO) is now selling two of OCSE's recently published employer information packets. Targeted especially to the nation's 6.5 million employers, *New Hire Reporting* and *The ABC's of Child Support: Employer Overview* will help employers learn what they need to know about new hire reporting and related child support issues.

New Hire Reporting provides program background and information on legislative requirements affecting employers, privacy issues, and multistate employer reporting, and provides telephone numbers for state new hire contacts. *The ABCs of Child Support* addresses new hire reporting, income withholding, medical support, centralized collections, and electronic funds transfer/electronic data interchange, and provides telephone numbers for state child support offices.

Order by calling GPO's Superintendent of Documents at (202) 512-1800, or online at www.access.gpo.gov. For *New Hire Reporting* (stock number 017-091-00249-5), the cost is $3.50 per copy. For *ABCs* (stock number 017-091-00248-7), the cost is $4.75 per copy. For more information visit the FPLS New Hire Reporting section of OCSE's Webpage at: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse. ☐

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 3, March 1999

Crossing the Line: OCSE Makes Increasing Interstate Collections First Priority

OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross has made interstate enforcement the agency's number one priority for 1999. Interstate cases make up one-third of the total child support enforcement (CSE) caseload and are considered to be among the most difficult cases to pursue.

The Commissioner has outlined a three-pronged approach designed to:

- Increase collections through the application of intensive casework and management principles;
- Provide states with technical assistance focused directly on improving interstate case processing; and
- Continue working with states' systems as a primary vehicle for furnishing information needed to process interstate cases.

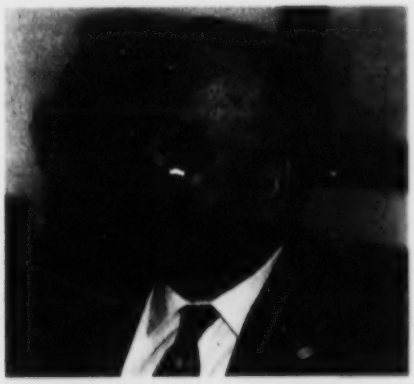
Commissioner Ross named Dianne Offett, OCSE's Interstate Liaison Officer, to oversee this initiative. "We must improve the level of our performance in interstate enforcement," Ross said, "and, working with our state partners, we are determined to do that."

Other activities OCSE is engaged in to increase interstate case collections include:

Policy/Systems Workshops

During April, 1999, OCSE will host three regional workshops focusing on the interrelationships between policy, programs, and child support systems, particularly as these relate to the interstate enforcement of support. Three major panel discussions will highlight the importance of interstate at these Workshops:

One-State vs. Two-State Interstate Processes: a debate by state participants on these two procedures;



OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross

Interstate Case Processing: the proactive use of the National Directory of New Hires and Federal Case Registry data matches; and

Collection and Distribution of Child Support Payments: a discussion of UIFSA and the implementation of State Disbursement Units and their effect on interstate case processing.

Special Improvement Projects (SIP) Grants

OCSE will award $2 million in SIP grants to states that demonstrate new and/or more effective methods, procedures, and models to foster collaborative efforts to improve interstate case processing.

Intensive Technical Assistance

OCSE is working with regional and state CSE staff to support technical assistance activities designed to increase interstate collections. Included in this effort is the High Volume Administrative Enforcement of Interstate

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Cases (AEI) project. AEI enables CSE agencies to perform automated data searches of out-of-state financial institutions to locate and/or secure assets held by delinquent obligors.

Interstate Regulation Initiative Group

This group will review areas of interstate case processing and indicate changes in the interstate regulations needed to improve interstate enforcement.

Interstate Reference and Referral Guide (IRG)

The IRG, a reference guide used by central registries, provides state-specific requirements for interstate case processing. OCSE is working with states and NCSEA to update the IRG, which will be made available on OCSE's Webpage.

Interstate Summit

Interstate enforcement will be the primary emphasis at OCSE's Ninth National Training Conference, to be held September 13-15, 1999, in Washington, DC.

For further information about interstate enforcement, contact Dianne Offett at (202) 401-5425.□

Interstate AT Issued

OCSE has issued Action Transmittal (AT) 98-30 regarding Interstate Child Support Enforcement Case Processing and the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act. This AT answers questions raised by states about interstate enforcement and clarifies federal interstate policy.

Answers questions . . . about interstate enforcement and clarifies federal interstate policy.

The AT covers the following categories: Direct Income Withholding, Allocation of Collections in Interstate Income Withholding, Enforcing Arrearages in Interstate Cases, Administrative Enforcement, Representation, Performance Incentives, Referral Processing, Interstate Paternity Establishment, Assistance with Discovery, Communication, Application for Services, Training, Payment Redirection, and Interstate Distribution.

Copies can be obtained from OCSE's National Resource Center at (202) 401-9383.□

America's Changing Demographics

One third of all children alive today are expected to become stepchildren, according to a recent publication available on the Internet.

Child support staff need to be aware of America's changing demographics in order to enhance the outcomes of our services. The CLASP publication, *Children and Stepfamilies: A Snapshot*, highlights a number of trends that may be of interest to the nation's child support community, especially as they affect collections and paternity establishment issues. The report states, for example, that:

- Between 1980 and 1990 the number of stepfamilies increased by 36 percent;
- By the year 2000, more Americans will be living in stepfamilies than in nuclear families; and
- More than half of Americans alive today have, are now, or eventually will be in one or more stepfamily situations during their lives.

The full report can be reached at: http://www.clasp.org/pubs/familyformation/stepfamiliesfinal.BK!.htm.□

Ohio Judicial Interstate Conference

On April 13-14, 1999, Ohio's Department of Human Services, in coordination with the State's Office of Child Support and the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, is presenting a conference for the judiciary.

"New Horizons—Interstate Child Support Enforcement in Ohio for Judges and Magistrates," will be held in Deer Creek State Park, Mt. Sterling, Ohio.

By invitation only, the conference agenda topics will include UIFSA implementation, the Uniform Parentage Act, interstate case law and legislation, updating welfare reform, and much more.

For more information, contact Cynthia Lucas at (614) 752-9740.□

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Reducing Welfare Costs and Dependency

By: Laura Wheaton and Elaine Sorensen

The following is excerpted from "Reducing Welfare Costs and Dependency: How Much Bang for the Child Support Buck?" by Laura Wheaton and Elaine Sorensen.

To what degree has the nation been successful in reducing welfare costs through child support, and how much more welfare savings might we expect if more fathers were to pay child support? . . . Child support reform was one of few areas of consensus among federal legislators as they enacted welfare reform in 1996.

The nearly universal backing for child support reform stems, in part, from the expectation that it can reduce welfare costs, welfare dependency, and poverty. . . . But the potential for child support payments to reduce spending in government transfer programs is determined by a complex array of factors, including the income and welfare characteristics of potential recipients, the amount of additional child support each family would actually receive, and the treatment of child support income in determining eligibility and benefits for various programs. . .

As policymakers look for ways to reduce government welfare costs and to improve the well-being of custodial families, they have turned their attention toward requiring noncustodial parents to fulfill their share of the financial burden.

The nearly universal backing for child support reform stems, in part, from the expectation that it can reduce welfare costs, welfare dependency, and poverty.

On average, noncustodial fathers are better off financially than custodial mothers are. Whereas 30 percent of custodial families are poor and one quarter of custodial mothers do not work, only 15 percent of noncustodial fathers are poor and 90 percent work. But getting fathers to pay more child support is only a first step. Even full payment by noncustodial fathers would not eliminate welfare and poverty entirely. The extent to which welfare and poverty can be reduced is determined by the amount of additional child support that the noncustodial fathers of poor children have the ability to pay. . . . To the extent that the 15 percent of fathers who are poor are the fathers of children on welfare, the ability to reduce welfare costs through increased child support will be limited. . . .

Using the Urban Institute's microsimulation instrument (TRIM2), we find that child support collections reduced the combined cost of AFDC, the Food Stamp Program, and Medicaid by 2 percent in 1989, and that if all custodial mothers had child support orders that were fully paid, child support collections could reduce costs by another 8 percent.

In order to assist policymakers in judging the likely impact of incremental reforms, we also present estimates of "cost avoidance"—government savings per dollar of child support collected. We estimate that, in 1989, each dollar of child support produced an average of $0.14 in program savings and that incremental expansions in child support enforcement could yield roughly $0.23 in savings for each additional dollar collected. . . .

Clearly, child support has not fully realized its potential for reducing government transfers to poor families. But child support is only part of the solution. Even if each custodial family had an award and received payment in full, the combined costs of AFDC [TANF], the Food Stamp Program, and Medicaid would be reduced by only 17 percent for custodial families and by 8 percent overall. Since it is unrealistic to expect a world in which every custodial mother receives child support, our estimates should be considered upper bounds for child support's potential to reduce program costs.□

Excerpted with permission. The full paper was published in The Georgetown Public Policy Review, *4:1 (Fall 1998). For a copy, contact Elaine Sorensen at the Urban Institute (202) 261-5564.*

Laura Wheaton, MMP, is a Research Associate at the Urban Institute who has been applying microsimulation techniques to child support policy analysis for the past several years. Elaine Sorensen, Ph.D, is a Senior Research Associate at the Urban Institute who has been examining child support policy for several years and has published extensively on the subject.

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The Expanded FPLS

The expanded Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) contains two major databases. The first, the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), was implemented on October 1, 1997. Employers report newly hired employees to their State Directory of New Hires (SDNH), which in turn reports the data to the NDNH. The second, the Federal Case Registry (FCR), was implemented on October 1, 1998, and will contain every state's child support cases and nonchild support orders established or modified on or after October 1, 1998.

These databases make it possible for child support caseworkers to get a lot more information about their cases a lot faster.

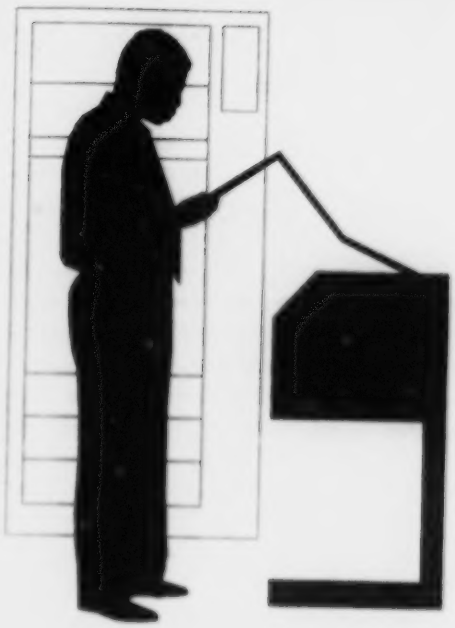
Without the state having to request the information, matches are returned to any state with a child support interest in the case or in the parties.

The expanded FPLS relies on proactive matching—an ongoing comparison between the information in the NDNH and the FCR. Without the state having to request the information, matches are returned to any state with a child support interest in the case or in the parties.

For example, when a noncustodial parent's employer reports to the SDNH and the state forwards its files on to the NDNH, any state that has reported the noncustodial parent to the FCR will receive new employment information. Proactive matching also occurs within the FCR. When a new case is added, the system automatically searches the FCR for any other case involving the same participant. If a match is found, the information is returned to the appropriate states.

State comments reflect the enthusiasm generated by an expanded FPLS: *"Our child support workers are full of anticipation in finally getting some good leads on some of our more mobile noncustodial parents"* (Dan Welch, Colorado). *"Before, information was sometimes not available for six months; now we have it almost immediately"* (Connie Putnam, Tennessee).

Some states are modifying their automated child support systems to minimize the impact of the increased amount of information flowing to caseworkers from the expanded FPLS. Routine tasks are being handled automatically by the system, while, through data comparison and the use of filters, caseworkers receive only the information needed to take the next appropriate action on the case.



The expanded FPLS is a powerful tool that impacts the daily workloads of all child support enforcement caseworkers. By getting better information faster, caseworkers can be more productive and effective. And with automation the influx of data can be controlled to minimize negative impact on workers while maximizing the benefits of increased establishment and enforcement of child support obligations for children and families.

If you would like more information about the expanded FPLS, contact Christine Jennings at (703) 345-8099.□

Financial Institution Data Matching in North Carolina

Welfare reform requires all states to enter into agreements with financial institutions conducting business within their state for the purpose of conducting a quarterly data match. The data match identifies accounts belonging to parents who are delinquent in their child support obligations. State child support offices may issue liens and levies on the accounts of delinquent obligors to collect past-due child support.

Recently, OCSE's Gina Barbaro spoke with Barry Burger, Assistant Chief for Program Operations in North Carolina's child support enforcement program.

CSR: *You've initiated a financial institution data match (FIDM). What is its status?*

BB: We currently have agreements with 55 financial institutions. Our first quarterly match was run in September of 1998 as a pilot, and altogether we matched on 484 individuals.The second quarterly processing is in progress at this time. We are finalizing agreements with additional institutions and making plans to track the amount of funds received from this identification process.

CSR: *What did you find to be most critical to FIDM implementation in North Carolina?*

BB: There were two important elements. First, the early and continued involvement of the banking industry helped us to understand each other's concerns and develop an approach that met the needs of all involved.

Second, designing a data match approach that used an existing state consortium made the process simple and efficient. A consortium of 12 states sharing a common database of information, the Electronic Parent Locator Network (EPLN) is using the services of TransFirst, Inc. to manage the process. TransFirst offers the EPLN member states a batch process to match delinquent child support obligors against financial institution data.

CSR: *How would you describe your working relationship with the professional associations?*

BB: Our banking associations have been a part of this project from the beginning. They participated in the drafting of state legislation, put us in touch with people who could help within the industry, and kept their members informed of our activities. Their contribution definitely made our job easier. We have a continuing dialogue which enables us to share information and address issues as they arise. In addition, the financial institution associations provided us with membership lists and mailing labels to send information to each institution on the requirements of the FIDM process.

CSR: *How about your outreach efforts?*

BB: Initially, a joint letter from North Carolina CSE and banking industry professional associations was issued to financial institutions announcing the federal legislation. Literature, including copies of the law and the federal technical specifications handbook, were made available on a widespread basis. We held a series of regular meetings with child support policy, legal, and technical staff and included banking and regulatory legal, technical, and management staff. At every opportunity we submitted articles for the North Carolina Bankers' Association newsletter, attended and made presentations at financial institution gatherings, and made ourselves available to answer questions from financial institutions whenever needed.

CSR: *What did you learn from the pilot match?*

BB: First, that institutions were willing to sign agreements but technology was not yet in place to accommodate the process, as software vendors and service providers did not have programming changes in place; second, that identifying the correct person to receive information about the Technical Set-up Form—which is used to determine the type of media the institution can accommodate—and identifying the technical contact person for the institution made things run much more smoothly; and third, working directly with external data processing companies who serve multiple financial institutions allowed them to develop needed technology to accommodate all of their customers rather than having to do this on an individual basis.

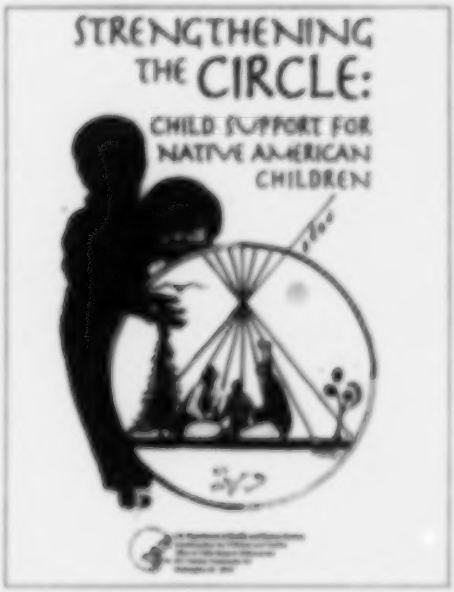
CSR: *Were any fees negotiated with the financial institutions?*

BB: None. North Carolina law requires a contract for payment of fees, so this would be handled outside of the agreement. Although our FIDM statute states that we may pay institutions a fee for conducting the match, we have not yet had a request for payment. Banks have been advised that the Community Reinvestment Act may be utilized by them for reimbursement of such costs.

Continued on page 7, "North Carolina."

New Publication . . .

Strengthening the Circle: Child Support for Native American Children



An informational resource, *Strengthening the Circle: Child Support for Native American Children*, is designed for a broad-based audience, including Native American parents, American Indian Tribal and Alaska Native governments, Tribal and inter-Tribal organizations, federal, state, and local child support enforcement, and other caring professionals. It discusses the new opportunities for Tribal Child Support Enforcement programs and intergovernmental partnerships to meet Native American family needs.

Strengthening the Circle's purpose is to summarize new information needed across Indian Country to assess and carry out provisions in the 1996 welfare reform legislation. Under welfare reform, 340 American Indian Tribes, 238 Alaska Native Village governments and organizations, and 245 Tribal courts are potentially eligible to apply for direct funds to provide child support enforcement services in Indian Country.

OCSE has a very limited number of copies of this outstanding publication available. Call the National Resource Center at (202) 401-9383.□

Military Paydays

Wage withholding for active duty military are prepared and mailed on the first of the month after the month from which the money was garnished. The military pay system is programmed so that when payday falls on a weekend or holiday, checks are mailed on the business day before the holiday or weekend. Below are the Defense Joint Military Pay System end-of-month paydays, March through December, 1999.

March	Thursday, April 1
April	*Friday, April 30*
May	Tuesday, June 1
June	*Thursday, July 1*
July	Friday, July 30
August	*Wednesday, September 1*
September	Friday, October 1
October	*Monday, November 1*
November	Wednesday, December 1
December	*Friday, December 31*□

Putting the Pieces Together

Policy/Systems Workshops

Don't forget to register for one of the three Regional Child Support Workshops sponsored by OCSE:

- April 6-8 in Washington, DC
- April 19-21 in St. Louis, MO
- April 26-28 in Phoenix, AZ.

Under a theme of "Putting the Pieces Together," workshops will focus on how states are using program enhancements under welfare reform to improve the business of child support. States are encouraged to send a mix of program, policy, and systems staff, as well as representatives from the courts.

For more information, contact Mike Torpy at (202) 401-5510 or by email at mtorpy@acf.dhhs.gov.□

SW Regional Conference

The Southwest Regional CSE Association's Annual Training Conference will be held June 13-16 in Little Rock, Arkansas. For information, contact Mary Smith at (501) 682-6828.□

OCSE Issues Interim Final Rule

By: Marilyn R. Cohen

An interim final rule which brings child support enforcement rules into conformity with major welfare reform legislation was published in the Federal Register on February 9, 1999, (64 FR 6237). CFR Parts affected by the rule are: Parts 301, 302, 303, 304, and 305. Sections removed are:

- **302.57:** Procedures for the Payment of Support Through the IV-D Agency or other Entity, because all collections are now made through the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) in accordance with section 466(a)(8)(B) of the Act;
- **303.21:** Safeguarding Information, because amended sections 453(b)(2), 453(l), and 453(m) of the Act contain numerous new provisions regarding the use, disclosure, and safeguarding of information which renders the limited scope of section 303.21 inconsistent with the Act;
- **303.80:** Recovery of Direct Payments, because the regulatory basis for the recovery of direct child support payments in IV-A cases was made obsolete when welfare reform ended the AFDC program;
- **303.103:** Procedures for the Imposition of Liens Against Real and Personal Property, because the first paragraph merely restates the law and the second paragraph is inconsistent with the revised section 466 of the Act under which liens arise by operation of law and liens arising in other states are entitled to full faith and credit in the state where the property is located;
- **303.105:** Procedures for Making Information Available to Consumer Reporting Agencies, because portions of the section are inconsistent with the revised section 466(a)(7) of the Act which requires obligors with any child support arrearage to be reported to consumer reporting agencies; and
- **305:** Audit and Penalty.

Section 302.31, Establishing Paternity and Securing Support, was amended to comply with the revised section 454(29) of the Act which provides that states have the option of choosing either title IV-D, IV-A, IV-E, XIX or the Food Stamp Agency as having the responsibility for determining good cause.

Section 302.32, Collection and Distribution of Support Payments by the IV-D Agency, was revised so that the SDU sends payments within 2 business days of the end of the month in which payment was received by the state.

Section 302.51, Distribution of Support Collections, was revised to comply with the Balanced Budget Act which requires the date of collection for distribution purposes in all child support cases must be the date the income is received by the SDU, once the SDU is required to be effective in the state.

Other revisions were made, including technical revisions to replace "URESA" with "UIFSA" and "AFDC" with "title IV-A". See the regulation for a complete description of all the revisions.

Consideration will be given to written comments received by April 12, 1999. Address comments to: Office of Child Support Enforcement, Department of Health and Human Services, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20447, Attention: Director, Policy and Planning Division. Copies of the interim final rule and explanatory preamble as published in the Federal Register are available as OCSE-AT- 99-01 from the National Resource Center at (202)401-9383. □

Marilyn Cohen is a Program Specialist in OCSE's Division of Policy and Planning.

North Carolina

Continued from page 5.

CSR: *How does the State intend to handle the volume of liens and levies that results from matches?*

BB: Once the matched data is downloaded to the system, the caseworker receives notification of a match as a work item. The worker makes the determination of whether it is a case to execute based on the case payment plan, payment history, and amount of arrears. For example, the debt may be $1,000, but support may be coming through income withholding for both the current support and the arrears. The worker may decide not to file a levy on this case.

CSR: *Future plans for the FIDM?*

BB: Continuing toward finalization of agreements with remaining banks; entering into dialogue and agreements with credit unions, brokerage firms and other financial institutions; training CSE staff on data match and administrative lien processes; and publicizing the use and results of this remedy.

CSR: Thank you. □

Gina Barbaro is OCSE's Financial Industry Liaison. Barry Burger is Assistant Chief for Program Operations in North Carolina's Child Support Enforcement Program.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement
Division of Consumer Services
Mail Stop OCSE/DCS
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Child Support Report

Rhode Island/New England States' Insurance Initiative

On Monday, March 1, 1999, selected Rhode Island insurance companies began using a secure Internet site to access delinquent obligors for the purpose of offsetting insurance proceeds for child support arrearages.

This site, the result of a federal/state/insurance company partnership funded by an OCSE Special Improvement Project grant, provides single on-line access to insurance companies doing business in the New England States.

Currently, the site contains more than 20,000 Rhode Island delinquent records, all available for insurance company research. Other New England States will be adding records in coming months.

The site enables companies to research, match, and perform automatic offset for past-due child support. More information on this project will be featured in a forthcoming issue of *CSR*. For more details, visit the public site at www.childsupportliens.com or call Rhode Island's child support director, Jack Murphy, at (401) 222-2966. ☐

Child Support Report
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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202) 401-4626 Fax (202) 401-5559 Internet: PSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Permission to reprint articles is granted. Acknowledging **CSR** is appreciated. ✣

If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report****, please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement **Vol. XXI, No. 4, April 1999**

Ad Council Campaign Speaks to Fathers

"They're Your Kids, Be Their Dad."

In a unique public-private partnership, the HHS Office of Child Support Enforcement, the States of Ohio (lead State), Illinois, Indiana, and Maryland, The Advertising Council, and the ad agency Ogilvy and Mather have collaborated to produce a series of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to encourage fathers to provide the emotional and financial support their children need and deserve. With a tag line of "They're Your Kids, Be Their Dad," the PSAs bring into sharp focus the importance of fathers to their children.

Ad Council president Ruth Whitten says, "The best way to reach our nation's kids is to help give parents the tools they need to raise happy, healthy children. This campaign takes an important step in reaching dads who may not understand just how critical their emotional and financial support is to their children's well-being as they move into adulthood."

The emotional and financial support of a father can change a child's life.

Nearly 17 million children grow up without a father in the home. But even though fathers may not live with their children, they have a profound impact on the quality of their lives. Without the involvement of both parents, there are often significant negative consequences for children. According to the HHS Fatherhood Initiative Fact Sheet:

- Children without fathers in their lives are more than twice as likely to live in poverty;

- Children in single parent families are 63 percent more likely to run away from home than children living in two-parent families; and
- Children in single parent families are about twice as likely to drop out of high school as are children who live with both parents.

Research shows that the more interaction a father has with his child, the more likely he is to voluntarily pay his child support. Of those fathers who have visitation privileges with their children, 75 percent voluntarily pay child support compared to 35 percent of those who do not have visitation privileges.

"By launching this campaign," says OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross, "we are telling fathers that they can make a difference for the better in their children's lives even if they don't live with them."

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Barbara Saunders, Deputy Director of Ohio's child support program and project chair says, "I am so pleased with the final product of the Ad Council's efforts! We are already receiving favorable comments. As the lead State's representative, I want to recognize the efforts of Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, and the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement as we worked together through this creative process. I hope the results of this first phase are a catalyst for future state/federal campaigns."

I hope the results of this first phase are a catalyst for future state/federal campaigns."

.....Barbara Saunders, Ohio Child Support Deputy Director

If you would like further information about the Ad Council's campaign to help fathers, contact OCSE's Rob Cohen at (202) 401-9373.

To order campaign materials, contact The Advertising Council, Inc., Fulfillment Center c/o Wm B. Meyer Inc., 255 Long Beach Blvd., Stratford, CT 06497, telephone (800) 933-7727. □

Quarterly Conference Calendar

April

19-21 *CSE Systems Workshop,* Adams Mark Hotel, St. Louis, MO, Linda Deimeke (202) 401-5439.

22-23 *Risk Management Workshop* (Open to State CSE System Project Directors) Adams Mark Hotel, St. Louis, MO, Roger Cronkhite (202) 401-6505.

26-28 *CSE Systems Workshop,* Crown Plaza Hotel, Phoenix, AZ, Linda Deimeke (202) 401-5439.

26-28 *South Carolina Statewide Training Conference,* Myrtle Beach Martinique, Myrtle Beach, SC, Michael Thigpen (803) 898-9450.

29-30 *Risk Management Workshop* (Open to State CSE System Project Directors) Crown Plaza Hotel, Phoenix, AZ, Roger Cronkhite (202) 401-6505.

May

2-5 *National Council of State Child Support Enforcement Administrators Annual Conference,* Grand Traverse Resort, Traverse City, MI, Wende Fowler (517) 373-7570.

10-13 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting,* Hyatt Regency Monterey, Monterey, CA, Noanne St. Jean (209) 582-3211 X 2403.

12-14 *North Carolina Council Conference,* Seatrail Plantation & Gold Resort, Brunswick County, NC, Barry Miller (919) 571-4114.

16-21 *Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association Conference,* Wyndham Resort and Spa, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Vernon Drew (301) 587-9622.

June

13-16 *Southwest Regional CSE Association Annual Training Conference,* Little Rock Excelsior Hotel and Convention Center, Little Rock, AR, Mary Smith (501) 682-6828.

16-18 *Connecting Fathers, Families, & Communities: Dads Make a Difference,* Green River Community College, Auburn, WA, Cheryl Reed (360) 664-5445.

24-25 *Child Support Directors' Dialogue,* Holiday Inn, Stevens Point, WI, Barb Foley (608) 267-3392.

July

6-8 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting,* Catamaran, San Diego, CA, Noanne St. Jean (209) 582-3211 X 2403.

7-9 *Alabama CSE Association Conference,* Quality Inn, Gulf Shores, AL, Pat Taft (334) 864-2298.

August

8-12 *NCSEA 48th Annual Conference & Exposition,* Palmer House Hilton & Towers, Chicago, IL, Heather Tonks (202) 624-8180.

25-27 *Georgia CSE Staff Training Seminar,* Hyatt Savannah, Savannah, GA, Gale Moon (404) 657-3866. □

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National Electronic Child Support Resource System

By: Susan Greenblatt

The overall OCSE Web site is fast becoming the portal for those interested in the nation's child support program. The National Electronic Child Support Resource System (NECSRS)–an electronic system that facilitates quick access and dissemination of child support enforcement resource materials–is a new addition to OCSE's overall Internet strategy. NECSRS links to existing federal, state, local, and tribal Web sites (see February '98 *CSR*).

A unique emphasis of NECSRS is the transmission of state/local electronic public information. Most documents are available on-line. However, resources available only in nonelectronic formats (e.g., hard copy, videotapes, etc.) will also be available, when feasible, to NECSRS users.

> *"....a national tool that is long overdue."*
>
> .....*Alisha A. Griffin, New Jersey Acting Assistant Child Support Director*

There are now about 2,500 documents, such as state legislation, local best practices, and federal policy documents indexed and available via NECSRS from OCSE, other federal agencies and some 20 states. We are continually adding new resources to expand NECSRS database and will be working with our partners to provide resources on all major subject areas to address the needs of the nation's child support enforcement community.

NECSRS is already getting good reviews. "I regularly use the Internet to perform research," says Texas child support director Howard Baldwin. "I know firsthand the frustration of searching to find useful information. NECSRS brings together a wide variety of child support resources from the most up-to-date source—the IV-D agencies. This new tool will enable the child support professional to focus Internet searches and quickly find relevant child support topics."

Sondra Cluck, a Nebraska child support worker, calls the search function "very user friendly." Melodie Johnson, a business analyst in Nebraska's Health and Human Services agency, says she "really likes the new search page."

Adds New Jersey Acting Assistant Director Alisha A. Griffin, "NECSRS, a national tool that is long overdue, creates an 'information highway' between state IV-D agencies. Now we can access other states' policies, procedures, staff, and activities at the touch of a button."

> *". . . will enable the child support professional to focus Internet searches and quickly find relevant child support topics."*
>
> .....*Howard Baldwin, Texas Child Support Director*

NECSRS is accessible through OCSE's home page at: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse. It permits users to search for materials by various subject areas and resource types. For example, a worker in Connecticut might like to know what types of outreach materials other states have developed in the area of paternity establishment. This user would use the "Search" function of NECSRS to locate all available resources meeting this criteria, and, if the material is available on-line, could view it directly from the other states' Web sites, print, and download it.

We urge you to use NECSRS and provide us your feedback through its easy to use on-line feedback feature. We will monitor your suggestions for improvements in order to ensure that NECSRS continues to provide up-to-date, relevant, and high-quality resource materials.

If you would like more information about NECSRS, contact your Regional Office or Susan Greenblatt at (202) 401-4849 or via e-mail at sgreenblatt@acf.dhhs.gov.□

Susan Greenblatt is a Special Assistant to OCSE's Director, Division of State and Local Assistance.

Accessing NECSRS requires . . .

- A 486 or Pentium computer and at least 16 megabytes (16MB) of random access memory (RAM) to ensure efficient performance;
- A VGA or super VGA monitor and graphics adapter card to display high-resolution graphic images; and
- An Internet connection via a high-speed modem (28.8 or higher, 56k preferred) or a local area network (LAN); and
- A browser such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer (both in version 3.0 or higher).□

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Medical Child Support Working Group Meets

The Medical Child Support Working Group held its inaugural meeting March 3-5, 1999, in Washington, DC. Authorized under the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 (PL 105-200) to identify impediments to the effective enforcement of medical support by state child support enforcement agencies, the group has 30 members jointly appointed by HHS Secretary Donna Shalala and Labor Secretary Alexis Herman.

Represented are state child support agencies, medical support and Medicaid agencies, human resources and payroll professionals, employers, group health plan sponsors and administrators, advocacy groups, HHS, and DOL.

"Today, there are still too many children who are without medical insurance because a noncustodial parent is not providing for coverage."

.....HHS Secretary Donna Shalala

The Working Group's co-chairs are David Gray Ross, Commissioner of OCSE, and Robert Doyle, Director of the Office of Regulations and Interpretations at DOL's Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration. OCSE's Samara Weinstein serves as Executive Director.

"Today, there are still too many children who are without medical insurance because a noncustodial parent is not providing for coverage," said Secretary Shalala.

"The mandate for this working group," Secretary Herman said, "is to analyze the problem and propose solutions. These are the important first steps to increasing health care coverage for children."

Lee Sapienza of New York State and Ellen Hennessy of the American Bar Association.

OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross and Medical Support Working Group Executive Director Samara Weinstein.

The Working Group is to submit a report to the two Secretaries by January 2000. "I am confident," Commissioner Ross said, "that this group, in accordance with its mandate, will suggest concrete steps to ensure the effective enforcement of medical support."

"I am confident that this group, in accordance with its mandate, will suggest concrete steps to ensure the effective enforcement of medical support."

.....OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross

Among other things, the report must address:

- the National Medical Support Notice;
- measures that establish the priority of medical support obligations;
- measures to improve the availability of alternate types of medical support; and
- recommendations on whether reasonable cost should remain a consideration.

The Secretaries of HHS and DOL are then to submit the Working Group's recommendations to Congress by March 2000, and later in the year they are to recommend appropriate legislation to improve the effectiveness and enforcement of qualified medical child support orders.

If you would like additional information on the Medical Child Support Working Group, please contact Samara Weinstein at (202) 401-6953 or e-mail her at sweinstein@acf.dhhs.gov.□

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Electronic Income Withholding Orders: Help for Employers

By: Carole Maloney

It's no secret that mandatory income withholding has been successful for children and families. It also places administrative responsibilities on employers, and easing these burdens is an important concern of OCSE's.

An exciting new program which may transform the way orders are processed.

OCSE has reduced the administrative burden on employers by giving them the opportunity to submit income withholdings electronically and mandating that states use a single standardized income withholding form which clearly spells out the terms of the order and what is expected of the employer. Now, the Department of Defense (DOD), one of the nation's largest employers, has gone a step further and initiated an exciting new program which may transform the way orders are processed.

This Electronic Commerce/Electronic Data Interchange (EC/EDI) pilot program was designed to enable participating state child support enforcement agencies to transmit income withholding orders electronically. Increasing the level of automation and eliminating paper processing are expected to increase accuracy, save time, and reduce processing costs for employers, as well as child support enforcement (CSE) agencies.

The EC/EDI pilot program is the responsibility of DOD Garnishment Operations, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Cleveland Center (DFAS-CL). This office is responsible for processing all income withholding orders (garnishments) for DOD employees. According to Rodney Winn, Assistant General Counsel for Garnishment Operations, the office processes an average of 11,000 court orders per month. That translates into more than a million pieces of paper a year. Sixty percent of this workload is made up of child support orders.

During Phase I of the pilot, CSE agencies in Baltimore City, Maryland, Alexandria, Virginia, and Arlington, Virginia sent income withholding orders electronically to two employers: DOD and Lockheed Martin, IMS. Lockheed Martin has contracts with Maryland and Virginia to process child support orders in all three jurisdictions. The electronic income withholding orders are transmitted via a Value Added Network using the X-12 approved Income and Asset Offset 521 Transaction Set. DFAS-CL incorporated the OCSE standard Income Withholding Order/Notice data elements into the 521 Transaction Set prior to implementation, ensuring that all required information is included in each electronic transmission.

EC/EDI transactions received by DFAS-CL are processed through its Integrated Garnishment System (IGS). Orders meeting IGS filter criteria are automatically submitted to the appropriate pay system without worker intervention. Orders requiring legal review are displayed within the Electronic Document Management System, enabling the worker to review the case, correct data if necessary, and submit the transaction to the appropriate pay system for processing against the employee's pay.

Working with Lockheed Martin, DFAS-CL implemented Phase I of the EC/EDI pilot program in December, 1998. While the initial volume of transactions has been low, there have been no serious problems, and the pilot is now considered to be successful. Consequently, DFAS-CL will begin the work of bringing other state CSE agencies into the process. Several states have already indicated a strong interest. DFAS-CL hopes that EC/EDI will eventually serve as the primary medium for the receipt of DOD child support orders.

If you would like more information about EC/EDI, contact Rodney Winn at (216) 522-5118.□

Carole Maloney is a Computer Specialist with the Division of Child Support Information Systems, Office of Automation and Special Projects, Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Final Rule on Case Closure Criteria

Action Transmittal OCSE-AT-99-04

In response to a presidential directive to reduce or eliminate mandated burdens on states, other governmental agencies, or the private sector, OCSE-AT-99-04, published in the Federal Register March 10, 1999, revises federal regulations outlining criteria for closing child support enforcement cases.

In making technical changes to 45 CFR 303.11(Case Closure Criteria) this AT clarifies the situations in which states may close cases and makes it easier for them to close unworkable cases. For a copy call OCSE's National Resource Center at (202) 401-9383.□

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Barriers to Applying for Child Support Services

Custodial Parents Speak Out in Focus Groups

In view of welfare reform's various time limitations for receiving TANF assistance, child support services have taken on increased significance. It is important to learn how accessible the child support enforcement program is to applicants: why, for example, some custodial parents who would appear to be eligible for services choose not to apply, and what obstacles are faced by those who do apply.

Recently, under contract to OCSE, Applewhite Research and Management Services of Alexandria, Virginia, conducted a series of focus groups to examine barriers that hinder or prevent some custodial parents who live in large urban settings from applying for child support enforcement services. Eight focus groups were conducted.

To some custodial parents in the focus groups, the nation's child support system can appear at times to be slow and unresponsive, with inconvenient hours, and insufficient outreach to the community. Comments revealed an assortment of perceived barriers.

Service depends on who you know

"The reason I was served was because I personally knew somebody who was able to help me get through the process. If it had not been for her, I would probably still be trying to get support."

Agencies are slow to act

"A lot of women get frustrated when they don't get action from the agency . . . (and) just walk away. The agency does not reach out to support them."

Hours are inconvenient

"When you work, you have to take time off to go down to the agency."

The Agency can be invisible

"You can't apply if you don't know that the agency exists."

Other comments of interest indicate that some do not apply for services because they are already receiving help from the noncustodial parent. As one participant said, *"I did not apply because he is doing what he is supposed to do. He gives me money for day care, clothes, rent. If he did not help me, I would not hesitate to seek child support enforcement help."*

Voice mail telephone systems are understood to be necessary but they can be frustrating to parents telephoning for information. And while CSE information may be available on the Internet, many of the parents who are most in need of information are least likely to have computers.

Recommendations

- Educate the community through nongovernment agencies or locations about child support services, where to apply, how to apply, and how to appeal if denied. Suggestions included providing literature in the community at recreational centers, churches, hospitals, grocery stores, and beauty shops, and making information available through television and radio announcements;
- Open branch offices in different parts of the city and extend hours into the evenings and on Saturdays;
- Train staff to direct applicants to the appropriate person who can help them, to make referrals, and to provide followup when information is needed to complete an application;
- Provide job referral support to fathers; and
- Work with community-based groups and organizations.□

New Publication . . .

An OCSE Guide for Hispanic/Latino Customer Service

This technical asistance Guide is designed to further OCSE's mission to improve the lives of children, their parents, and their caretakers, while respecting the diversity that enriches the United States. It provides the nation's child support community with new information about Hispanic/Latino customers and child support enforcement.

A fast-growing segment of the US population, Hispanic/Latino families are concentrated in 10 states and many metropolitan areas. Census data indicates that there are over 1.2 million custodial parents of Hispanic/Latino origin.

For your copy of the Guide, call OCSE's National Resource Center at (202) 401-9383.□

Project Save Our Children

On February 24, 1999, John Monahan, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Administration for Children and Families, testified on child support enforcement's new and promising initiative, "Project Save Our Children," before the Committee on Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the U.S. House of Representatives. The following are excerpts from his testimony.

We know that many noncustodial parents take seriously their responsibilities to pay child support regularly and on time. These parents recognize the importance of the financial and emotional support their children need and voluntarily meet these responsibilities. And for the majority of noncustodial parents who do not voluntarily meet their responsibilities, routine enforcement tools like wage withholding or license revocation, will be sufficient to require them to pay their financial obligation.

Project Save Our Children is targeted at [a] small group of parents who over long periods of time willfully fail to take responsibility for their children. By prosecuting [them] we are sending a pointed message of responsibility.

However, for a small minority of cases, even tougher enforcement penalties must be imposed. These are the most flagrant cases, where people have the resources to pay but willfully refuse to provide support for their children.

Project Save Our Children is targeted at this small group of parents who over long periods of time willfully fail to take responsibility for their children. By prosecuting parents who have been ordered to pay support but will not do so, we are sending a pointed message of responsibility to them and helping to give their children a better chance in life.

Under this initiative, HHS will launch task forces in 17 states (California, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington) and the District of Columbia. State child support offices will refer their most serious delinquent child support cases to these sites, where trained investigative staff will locate the violator, document information needed for prosecution, and then provide the investigated case to the appropriate prosecutor.

We know that many noncustodial parents pay child support regularly and on time. These parents recognize the importance of the financial and emotional support their children need and voluntarily meet these responsibilities.

The new teams are based on a model project in Columbus, Ohio, started last summer. The Midwest Law Enforcement Task Force, formed by the HHS Office of Child Support Enforcement and HHS Inspector General's Office, joined with Justice Department prosecutors and investigators, state child support agencies, and local law enforcement officials to coordinate efforts in a new investigative team.

That first task force covered 3 states: Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio. Four more hub sites, covering 14 additional states and the District of Columbia, are expected to be operational by the end of the first year.

With this initiative we will identify, investigate, and, when warranted, prosecute flagrant, delinquent child support offenders, and collect all outstanding payments. Our goal is a nationwide, comprehensive, coordinated Health and Human Services/Justice Department response to unresolved interstate and intrastate child support enforcement cases alike.□

Mark Your Calendar

OCSE's Ninth National CSE Training Conference, an Interstate Summit, is scheduled for September 13-15 in Arlington, Virginia. The theme: *"Crossing the Line for the Children of America."* For more information about this important event, call Bertha Hammett at the National Training Center: (202) 401-5292.□

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Child Support Report

OCSE and Head Start Association Sign Agreement

OCSE and the National Head Start Association (NHSA) have entered into a partnership agreement to assist parents in becoming more positive influences on their children and to provide them with increased financial support.

Jointly signed by OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross and NHSA Chief Executive Officer Sarah M. Greene, the agreement pledges the two organizations to work toward assuring that all Head Start programs and local child support offices develop partnerships to distribute information on child support services and assist eligible parents to access these services. For additional information on the partnership agreement, contact John Doyle, OCSE's Program Collaboration Specialist at (202) 205-4590 or e-mail Jdoyle@acf.dhhs.gov. ☐

"I believe that the OCSE-NHSA partnership represents a significant opportunity for the child support enforcement program."

David Gray Ross

Child Support Report
Vol. XXI No. 4
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Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 5, May 1999

Successful Partners in Connecticut

By: Anne Stanback

Anne Stanback (l) with Diane M. Frey, Connecticut's Child Support Director.

A successful partnership is defined by three conditions. The parties must bring something useful to the table, have the ability to work well together (even when working from different perspectives), and be committed to a common purpose. Over the past eight years the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) and the State's Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) have created a successful partnership.

As a statewide, nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of women and their families, CWEALF provides a variety of programs that focus on educating and empowering women to pursue their legal rights. During our 25-year history, women have called us continually

Continued on page 2, "Partners"

Happy Mother's Day

As we celebrate Mother's Day this month, some facts of interest.

The number of single mothers in the United States—9.8 million in 1998—has remained constant since 1995 after nearly tripling over the previous quarter century. Last year, single mothers comprised about five-sixths of all single parents. Their families constituted 26 percent of all parent-child situations, up from 12 percent in 1970.

Most single mothers (7.7 million or 78 percent) maintained their own household in 1998. The vast majority of single mothers who maintained their own household (69 percent) did not have another adult in the home to help them out.

As of 1995, the majority (55 percent) of women ages 15-44 who had given birth in the previous year were in the labor force, up from 31 percent in 1976. The percentage of returnees to the labor force was even higher (77 percent) if the woman was 30-44 and the birth was her first.

There were 10 million preschoolers nationwide in 1994 whose mothers were employed. About 43 percent of these children received care from relatives other than their mothers (fathers, grandparents, siblings, aunts, or uncles) during most of the mothers' working hours. Another 29 percent went to a day-care center or nursery school, while 6 percent received care from their mothers at their workplaces or while they worked at home.

Among the 35 million mothers in the United States ages 15-44 in 1995, 10.8 million had one child, 13.9 million had two, 6.9 million had three, and 3.4 million had four or more.□

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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U.S. Department of
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Partners

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about certain issues and child support enforcement has always been near the top of the list. So, in 1991, we decided to focus our organizational resources on providing information about child support in the City of Hartford and the surrounding community.

Some parents simply were unaware of the powerful resources of Connecticut's child support enforcement system.

When we approached BCSE, we discovered they shared our concerns and were enthusiastic about working with us on the problems we were hearing about from our clients. That first discussion turned into an ongoing dialogue and collaborative effort to combine our respective strengths and look for solutions that would help women improve their lives and the lives of their families.

One area of need centered on the number of custodial parents who might have benefited from child support services but were not using the system. Some thought that eligibility for child support depended on being married to the child's father (or mother), or on being legally divorced. And some parents simply were unaware of the powerful resources of Connecticut's child support enforcement system.

As a nonprofit organization, known and respected in the community, CWEALF stepped into this gap and began, with the encouragement of BCSE, to educate parents about the importance of applying for child support services. CWEALF trainer teams (one is always bilingual) explain the basic components of the child support system in Connecticut, dispel common myths about eligibility, and walk people through the various processes.

As we work with parents, we try to help them understand the constraints and reasons that may cause the child support application to be a lengthy process and provide them with realistic expectations and time frames. We tell them how we think the system should work but also how it does work in many instances.

Often we are able to gain the trust of parents precisely because we are "outside the system," although our workshop participants understand that we work closely with the child support agency. Because of the level of trust that develops, many of these parents call our office when they come up against an obstacle in the child support system, such as an interstate case that is not moving forward or a lack of Spanish-speaking child support staff. We listen to the caller's frustration and then act as a liaison with BCSE in seeking a solution.

CWEALF's mission is to educate and empower.

Often we simply clarify information for the caller or provide assurances that the State is doing everything that can be done. In other situations, a phone call to BCSE or to the appropriate agency in another state can result in a wonderful success story. In these instances it is our partnership with BCSE that enables us to be effective.

CWEALF's mission is to educate and empower. The education piece comes easily but, like many who do this work, we sometimes struggle with what empowerment really means. So many of the parents we work with feel beaten down by their lives and by the very systems that are in place to support them. For these parents, the "empowerment" our intervention provides may simply be a steady child support check that enables the family to move closer to economic self-sufficiency. We help many parents feel empowered, however, by providing them with the information and skills they need to navigate the system themselves. And this is made possible by our successful partnership with BCSE.□

Anne Stanback is Executive Director, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund.

More State Systems Certified

Total Now 40

With the addition of Illinois, New Mexico, and Oregon a total of 40 states/territories have now received certification of their statewide automated systems. They are, in the order of certification: *Montana, Delaware, Georgia, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Arizona, Utah, Connecticut, Wyoming, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Idaho, Colorado, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Guam, New York, Iowa, Alabama, Texas, North Carolina, New Jersey, Vermont, Puerto Rico, Maine, Tennessee, Minnesota, Kentucky, South Dakota, Massachusetts, Florida, Arkansas, Missouri, Hawaii, New Mexico, Illinois, and Oregon.*□

Texas' Paternity Opportunity Program

By: Joan Hutcheson

The Texas hospital-based Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) represents a successful collaboration among hospitals, the Office of the Attorney General (the child support agency in Texas), and the Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS). Recognizing that each organization has different goals—and respecting the differences—was the first step to achieving success in this joint effort to give fathers an opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge paternity.

Hospital birth registrars now distribute written material on paternity to unwed parents, offering them an opportunity to sign the paternity acknowledgment form.

Also important: the decision by BVS to modify the Acknowledgment of Paternity form to meet child support's needs, and the training of hospital staff provided by the child support program. In the first year of POP (1993) five child support staff, located strategically throughout the State, trained hospital personnel at 283 birth hospitals and 60 birthing centers across Texas.

Hospital birth registrars now distribute written material on paternity to unwed parents, offering them an opportunity to sign the paternity acknowledgment form. Signed forms are sent to BVS where a computer tape is generated and forwarded to the child support agency. There it is matched against the caseload. When a match is found, appropriate staff are alerted to the need for action.

In fiscal year 1998, 101,743 children were born out of wedlock in Texas, with 58,264 fathers acknowledging paternity. Nearly 25,000 of the children whose paternity was acknowledged had cases with the child support agency—information that proved to be invaluable in processing the 40,000 paternity orders in that year.

Close cooperation and collaboration between the Bureau of Vital Statistics and child support will need to continue in the current year as the Texas legislature looks at changing the Texas Family Code. Consistent with the federal mandate for states to have a simple civil process to establish paternity, it seems likely that the signed Acknowledgment of Paternity will be made a legal finding.

With this change, staff at more than 300 hospitals in Texas with labor and delivery facilities, as well as those who work at the numerous clinics where women receive prenatal care, would need to be retrained on paternity acknowledgment procedures. One important difference under the revised statute: if a pregnant woman is married to someone other than the biological father, the husband must sign a denial of paternity before the biological father can acknowledge paternity.

If you would like more information about Texas' Paternity Opportunity Program, contact Joan Hutcheson at (512) 460-6317. □

Joan Hutcheson is Supervisor of the Paternity Opportunity Program, Office of the Attorney General, Child Support Division, Austin, Texas.

ACF's Y2K Website

DHHS maintains a Y2K Resources Homepage at http://y2k.acf.dhhs.gov. The Homepage provides information for both technical users (Y2K Solutions) and nontechnical users (Y2K 101). Y2K Solutions provides a section on software tools that tests the date arithmetic at work in computer systems. In addition, the Homepage contains a Y2K Document Library that provides users with a method to actively search critical Y2 documents.

ACF sponsors a Y2K Website that may be accessed through an active link at DHHS's Y2K Resources Homepage. In addition, ACF has established a Y2K Help Desk. The toll-free number is 1-888-HHS-Y2K1. In the Washington Metro area the number is 202-401-7041. Toll charges apply.

ACF's Y2K Website provides federal documents related to state's Y2K compliance and includes a section on free downloads for Y2K software testing. Also, additional resources are listed that may be of value to those implementing Y2K solutions.

Through ACF's Y2K Website active link to state reporting forms, states may download the forms and obtain Y2K state reporting contact information. States are required to report the Year 2000 readiness of the systems that support the Child Care, Child Support Enforcement, Child Welfare, and TANF core program functions. Included are the definitions for each item to be reported, including the six project phases required to bring an organization's information system into Year 2000 compliance. □

Grandparent Parenting on the Rise

Under welfare reform, at a state's option, grandparents (the parents of the noncustodial parent in question) can be held liable for the support of a child whose parents are minors if the custodial parent is receiving TANF. This may be an issue for many thousands of grandparents. In the United States today over 2 million children—many of whose parents are themselves minors—are being raised solely by their grandparents or other relatives.

While the phenomenon of grandparents and other relatives raising children is nothing new, since 1970 there has been an increase in all types of grandparent-headed households. In 1998 more than 2.5 million grandparents headed families with or without parents present. Together, these families cared for over 3.9 million children.

The number of children in households maintained by grandparents with their mothers present increased 118 percent from 1970 to 1997. The number of households with fathers present increased 217 percent. Since 1990 the greatest increase has been in those grandparent-headed households without either parent present. Between 1990 and 1998 the number of these families increased by 53 percent.

Many grandparents and other relative caregivers are older individuals unexpectedly raising a second family with few extended family and/or community supports. Grandparent caregivers, for example, are 60 percent more likely to live in poverty than are grandparents not raising grandchildren. Two-thirds of children living in grandmother-only headed households without parents present were living in poverty in 1997.

Although most grandparent-maintained families live in the South and in nonmetropolitan areas, grandparents raising children transcend all socioeconomic groups and ethnicities: 1.7 million or 43.6 percent of all children living in grandparent-maintained families are white; 1.4 million or 35.9 percent are black; and 701,000 or 18 percent are Hispanic.□

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998 Current Population Survey, and "Generations United," a national coalition dedicated to intergenerational policy, programs, and issues.

Parents With Custody of Children

The Census Bureau recently reported data on parents who have custody of children whose other parent is absent from the home. Highlights from the report:

- Nearly 3 out of every 10 children live with only one of their parents—usually the mother. In 1996, 22.8 million children under 21 years of age lived with 13.7 million custodial parents while their other parent lived elsewhere. About 11.6 million or 85 percent of the 13.7 million custodial parents were women, while 2.1 million or 15 percent of the men were custodial parents.
- Custodial mothers are more likely to receive child support awards than custodial fathers. In 1996, 58 percent or 8.0 million of the 13.7 million custodial parents had child support awards. Award rates were 61 percent for mothers and 40 percent for fathers.
- Custodial mothers also are more likely to receive payments due. Of the 6.2 million women due payments, 70 percent received at least a portion of the amount owed. The corresponding rate for the 700,000 men due payments was 57 percent.
- Custodial parents who do not receive the child support due them have a relatively high poverty rate. About 32 percent of custodial parents with awards who did not receive any child support due them in 1995 were poor. About 22 percent of custodial parents receiving some or all of the child support owed were poor.
- Visitation and joint custody are associated with higher child support payment rates. About 10.6 million (77 percent) of the 13.7 million parents who were not living with their children had joint custody and/or visitation provision for contact with their children. The 7.0 million noncustodial parents who owed child support in 1995 were more likely to have made payments if they had either joint custody or visitation rights—74 percent with such provisions made payments compared with 35 percent without them.

For more information contact Census Bureau staff at (301) 457-4214 and reference P60-196, March 1999.□

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Child Support for Custodial Mothers and Fathers: 1995." The data in this report were collected prior to the passage of welfare reform. The source of data is the April 1996 supplement to the Current Population Survey.

Implementing Self-Assessment

By Amy Guzejka, Melissa Ingalls, and Jeff Lewis

Welfare reform requires states to conduct annual reviews of their child support enforcement programs to measure state compliance with federal regulations and report the results of these self-assessment reviews to the Secretary of DHHS.

Self-assessment is essentially a transfer of some audit functions and responsibilities from the Federal Government to the states. It differs from audit in being closely tied to program management as a mechanism that gives managers the opportunity to make mid-course corrections. (See July '98 *CSR*.)

In implementing the self-assessment requirement, some states had concerns about how IV-D staff may react to being reviewed and evaluated by their peers. Officials were aware that it could be seen in one of two ways: as a statewide collective effort to increase the performance and efficiency of the program, or as child support "police" out to catch program staff in minor process errors.

In addressing this, some states have developed approaches to counteract possible negative perceptions and set a tone that is conducive to teamwork and focused on children. Colorado and Texas are two examples.

Colorado

With the passage of welfare reform, Colorado saw an opportunity through self-assessment to improve its child support program, so State officials quickly went to work for the passage of legislation to support the requirement. They also increased the number of staff assigned to self-assessment from one to four.

Colorado believed that having comprehensive county buy-in and participation in the design and implementation of the self-assessment program was crucial, and this participation paved the way for county approval. "The success that Colorado has enjoyed with self-assessment," says Colorado's child support director Pauline Burton, "is directly attributable to the effort that has gone into establishing strong partnerships with our stakeholders."

Gaining approval was a challenge because a former review procedure was seen as a "gotcha" process that left many county child support administrators suspicious. It took two teleconferences, many presentations, and time to demonstrate that Colorado's self-assessment process was not designed as a "gotcha game" but was designed to improve the quality and performance of the program.

Texas

In Texas, where self-assessment is part of the program monitoring section, with the chief reporting to the child support director, eight experienced staff are assigned to do on-going case reviews. Like Colorado, Texas knew that instituting a successful self-assessment program meant obtaining buy-in from those being assessed and, once buy-in was achieved, continuing to nurture the relationship. The success of self-assessment in Texas is based on partnership and open communication between the field operation's office management and program monitoring's self-assessment unit.

Self-assessment is a valuable management tool that requires partnerships among child support staff at all levels.

Jerome A. Lindsay, Texas' Interim Deputy Director of Field Operations, says, "The collaboration between our headquarters program monitoring staff and the field operations people has resulted in better data retrieval and reporting, as well as increased productivity."

Early on, program monitoring staff solicited field staff input concerning welfare reform's mandate for self-assessment reviews. Each field operations manager was afforded an opportunity to have one or two staff participate in reviews. Field staff were then paired with program monitoring staff to create regional review teams.

A structured training component was created, using program monitoring staff and federal regional audit staff as technical advisors for those field staff selected to participate. This approach has proven to be very useful in helping field management gain first-hand knowledge of areas requiring enhancements and in expediting corrective action plan development.

State and federal employees believe that self-assessment is a valuable management tool that requires partnerships among child support staff at all levels. Such partnerships and teamwork will continue to evolve as the self-assessment process itself evolves. If you would like more information, contact Amy Guzejka at (617) 565-1135.□

Amy Guzejka is OCSE's National Coordinator for Self-Assessment; Melissa Ingalls is Evaluation Team Supervisor in Colorado's Child Support Program; Jeff Lewis is Director of Program Monitoring in Texas' Child Support Program.

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Child Support Enforcement Community and the YMCA Join Hands to Strengthen Families

By: Tom Starnes

Two recent letters signal the beginning of a cooperative effort between the child support enforcement community and the YMCA of America.

One letter sent to the thirty-five YMCAs that operate "Family Resource Centers," is from David Mercer, the National Executive Director of the YMCA. In his letter, Mr. Mercer states, "As you know, the YMCA of the USA has pledged to serve more disadvantaged youth and families in our effort to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. To this end, the YMCA of the USA has entered into a partnership with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, whose mission is to strengthen families and 'bring hope and support to America's children.'"

The other letter, from OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross, was sent to the child support directors of the states in which YMCA Family Resource Centers are located. In his letter, Commissioner Ross states that the YMCAs "present an excellent opportunity for the child support community to improve its services to America's families."

The intent of this partnership is to link the 2200 YMCAs in the United States with the child support offices in their communities.

In conversations over the past year involving representatives from the two groups, it became clear that child support had much to gain from a cooperative effort. Local YMCAs, for example, could distribute information on available child support services and assist eligible parents to access these services. And local YMCA centers could be used as sites for workshops and parenting classes. "YMCA staff touch base with hundreds of families each week," says Barbara Taylor, coordinator of the Y's family resource center program. "This partnership is one way the Y staff can create linkages between Y families and other family support agencies."

Although this initial effort focuses on the Family Resource YMCAs and the child support agencies in those locales, nothing precludes contacts being made between

OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross

local child support offices and local YMCA centers across the country. The intent of this partnership is to link the 2200 YMCAs in the United States with the child support offices in their communities.

If you would like more information about this outreach effort, contact OCSE's Tom Starnes at (202) 401-5021.

Tom Starnes is an Advocacy Relations Specialist with OCSE's Office of Automation and Special Projects.

Families in Transition

DHHS has just released a new publication, "Supporting Families in Transition—A Guide to Expanding Health Coverage in the Post-Welfare Reform World." The Guide assists state policymakers and others in understanding what the Medicaid statute and regulations require of states in terms of Medicaid eligibility, enrollment, redetermination, notice and appeal rights, and other program and policy areas; discusses the Medicaid requirements and options that apply when families seek TANF assistance, leave TANF, and have no contact with the TANF program; and points readers to the various sources of funding that are available to states to pay for outreach, training, and other activities to helps states bring their systems into compliance with the law and increase health insurance coverage for low-income families with children.

This publication will soon be available on OCSE's Webpage. For now it is accessible at: http://www.acf.dhhs.news/welfare/welfare.htm.

Computer-Based Training Arrives

OCSE has announced release of the first of six computer-based training (CBT) courses: Child Support Enforcement Orientation. Future CBT course topics include: location, paternity establishment, enforcement, interstate case processing, and distribution. (See April '98 *CSR*.)

This multimedia training course provides a comprehensive orientation to the Child Support Enforcement program.

Produced by a partnership of OCSE, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Graduate School (GS/USDA), and Human Technology, Inc., this multimedia training course provides a comprehensive orientation to the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program. Its four training modules are:

- ABC's of Child Support;
- Evolution of Child Support Enforcement;
- Federal and State Organization; and
- Child Support Enforcement Functions.

In April, copies of the course CD-ROM were disseminated to State Child Support Directors, State CSE Training Liaisons, National CSE Training Work Group members, and to the Federal Regional Offices. Copies also were made available to many Indian Nation jurisdictions.

The information included in the CBT Orientation course has been organized according to an instructionally sound approach that maximizes learning efficiency and retention. Although not required by the program, users are encouraged to work through the modules sequentially. This gives caseworkers the flexibility to obtain information on a "just in time" basis, according to individual need. A glossary of terms and acronyms is included, and minimum computer specifications are listed inside the CD-ROM sleeve.

Within the CBT are hyper text links to OCSE's Website "portal." Once at the OCSE Website, the learner can access enormous amounts of information, including state-specific material, through the National Electronic Child Support Resource System.

"We firmly believe," says OCSE's National Training Center Chief Yvette Hilderson Riddick, "that consistent use of this CBT training by staff will result in better retention of basic CSE information, which should in turn result in improved performance and less frequent need for retraining."

While some states' CSE programs have fully or partially staffed training units, others have few resources dedicated to training. For them, CBT courses provide exceptional learning opportunities. As Dick Morton, CBT Project Manager for GS/USDA states, "Truly, this CBT provides the right learning, at the right time and in the right location – all designed by a very remarkable partnership!"

For more information on this initiative, contact Charlene Butler, OCSE's CBT Project Manager, in the National Training Center at (202) 401-5091.□

Customer Service Outreach in Olympia

You may never have thought about it, but there are 8,887 central public libraries, 7,017 branch libraries, and 1,035 bookmobiles in the U.S. One child support office has taken advantage of this resource in an innovative way.

In Olympia, Washington, the child support office recently conducted two very successful informational Q & A customer outreach sessions in public libraries. The meetings were held during evening hours and the space was provided at no cost to the agency. Each session—one for custodial parents and one for noncustodial parents—received free advertising in the local paper and drew about 20 participants. Typical comments: "This seminar was a great community service." "Very good information." "Very helpful." "Need more meetings of this sort."

The Olympia child support office hopes to offer these sessions on a regular basis after July 1. For more information, contact Gail McCleery, the Olympia Field Office SEO/Outreach Coordinator at (360) 438-8549.□

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OCSE Announces Funds for Demonstration Projects

OCSE announces the availability of Fiscal Year 1999 funding for demonstration projects as authorized under Title IV-D and Section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

These demonstrations are intended to add to the knowledge and promote the objectives of the Child Support Enforcement program.

The closing date for submission of applications is June 21, 1999. Applications postmarked after the closing date will be classified as late.

For information about requirements and how to apply, contact OCSE's Tom Killmurray by phone at (202) 401-4677 or e-mail at tkillmurray@acf.dhhs.gov.☐

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet: JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement **Vol. XXI, No. 6, June 1999**

An Interview with Arizona's Nancy Mendoza

Nancy Mendoza, Director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement in Arizona's Department of Economic Security, recently gave her views to *CSR* on the State's success with systems development.

CSR: *Arizona was one of a few states to meet the Family Support Act of 1988 certification requirements and the first to request and have a PRWORA Certification review. What was most important to your success?*

NM: A structured approach to systems development was a primary key. We developed a knowledgeable group of systems designers, programmers, policy writers, trainers, and child support staff who could create and maintain a sophisticated automated system. We refined our systems development practices and methodologies to ensure quality implementation. We manage projects using automated work plans that define resource commitments, critical path timelines, milestones, and deliverables. For projects of this size to be successful, however, there must be involvement of all stakeholders. Federal guidance must be clear and consistent. State leadership must be strong. Departmental cooperation must be established. County partnerships must be amicable and focused on the good of the children and families we serve. Finally, the vendor relationship must be one of mutual trust and respect.

CSR: *Some states are struggling with the State Disbursement Unit (SDU), particularly the conversion of nonIV-D information. Yours is operational for both IV-D and nonIV-D cases. How did you do it?*

NM: We had already centralized IV-D payment processing in 1997, prior to the establishment of the SDU in December 1998, but nonIV-D case payments were processed by the Clerks of the Superior Court. In Arizona

the Child Support Coordinating Council serves as a forum for addressing cross-cutting child support issues. This Council formed a work group to guide the transition to centralized payment processing. The group met on a biweekly basis for several months prior to implementation of the SDU and has continued to serve as a troubleshooting forum since implementation. The tasks leading up to going "live" on December 1, 1998 included: enacting legislation that outlined the respective management responsibilities of the IV-D agency and the Clerks of the Court, along with a statutory distribution algorithm for nonIV-D cases; providing real time on-line access to ATLAS (Arizona's IV-D automated system) for Clerks of the Superior Court to ensure their ability to continue to serve constituents; developing and delivering training for Clerk of Court staff in the use of the automated system to monitor payments, produce pay histories, and add non-IV-D cases into the State Case Registry; converting case

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information from the Clerk of Court systems into ATLAS; developing software to provide for nonIV-D EFT/EDI direct deposit functionality and financial management; and reaching out to the general public, the private bar, and current payors.

CSR: *You've been involved with OCSE's child support training package from the start. Any suggestions for automating child support distribution to meet welfare reform requirements?*

NM: It's important to spend as much time as possible understanding the requirements and related impacts, and resolving design issues. We started very early, investing time in understanding the new requirements and participating in the national discussion. We found that a massive conversion of historical financial records was needed to handle the new distribution requirements, which led to a separate conversion team being established to work in parallel with the development team. We also needed to insure that all related reporting and case processing changes were developed and implemented simultaneously, and that required another separate team. The fundamental change to the organization's financial structure can't be underestimated. Its ramifications are felt throughout the organization, from program funding and federal reporting to case processing and obligation calculations. This means that a solid implementation plan, including extensive training and retraining of end-user staff, is mandatory.

CSR: *Describe the ATLAS automated wage withholding process for us.*

NM: The automated income withholding process links to reported new hires within Arizona. A new hire, as reported by an employer through the New Hire Reporting process, or through contact with one of the parties, is matched to all noncustodial parents with an open case in the ATLAS system. Any case associated with that noncustodial parent must meet specific criteria prior to an administrative income withholding order being automatically sent to the noncustodial parent's new employer. The system reviews several criteria to determine whether an automated income withholding order should be issued or whether, based upon certain criteria, an alert should be sent to the caseworker to evaluate the case. The system compares the newly received information to current employer information, including how recently the person was hired. This is important because under Arizona law an employer who rehires an employee within 90 days must comply with a previously issued order. The system reviews the case for good cause status, case function, order type, and payment records to determine whether a secondary employer should be issued a wage assignment. Finally, the system reviews the case for any pending legal actions, such as hearings or administrative reviews. When a case meets all of the selection criteria, the federally mandated interstate wage withholding packet is generated through a trigger process, and the administrative income withholding is completed and in the mail to the employer within the mandated 48 hour timeframe. Since Arizona provides for a statutory calculation of an arrears payment proportional to the current order and the amount of any arrearages, ATLAS calculates and includes a payment on arrears with the order. We received the Governor's Recognition Award for our work on this project.

For projects of this size to be successful, there must be involvement of all stakeholders.

CSR: *You're working closely with OCSE's Audit Division to pilot test a data reliability test deck for the OCSE 157. What can you tell us about that?*

NM: For the playing field to be level for all states and for the capped pool of incentive funds to be fairly allocated, we must be evaluated on comparable data. We offered to participate in this pilot effort because we believe that the integrity of the new performance incentives depends on data reliability. We have developed an approach in Arizona that we feel will strengthen our program's data reliability. Each line of the OCSE 157 has been reviewed for its impact on daily case processing. The five incentive areas have been outlined for staff. The data within ATLAS has been assessed and refined to match the line requirements of the OCSE 157, enabling workers to see what effect their performance has on the report. For example, when a paternity is established, the screens within ATLAS that contain the information must be filled out appropriately for the OCSE 157 to read that a paternity was established. By having the exact data fields that impact the report, staff are able to better monitor and maintain their personal goals. In addition to the required federal reporting cycle, we have programmed the 157 to issue monthly reports so that our progress can be monitored throughout the year. OCSE audit staff have been on site for several visits in preparation for building a complete test deck for this report. We anticipate that Arizona will have completed the test deck and review of the data by early June.

CSR: *Thank you.*□

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Georgia Fatherhood Initiative Helps Low-Income Men Pay Their Support

By: Robert Johnson

Georgia's Fatherhood Initiative, started in 1997 by DHR's Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Office, works with noncustodial parents who have a case with CSE but are unable to pay their child support. "The Fatherhood Initiative makes it possible for low-income men who owe child support to go to technical school, learn a marketable skill, and go to work," says Georgia child support director Dan Elmore.

The program offers counseling, a chance to earn a high school equivalency diploma (GED), vocational training, job placement, and the opportunity to have a supportive role in the lives of their children.

"The Fatherhood Initiative makes it possible for low-income men who owe child support to go to technical school, learn a marketable skill, and go to work."

.....Georgia child support director Dan Elmore

CSE has entered into contracts with the State's technical schools, other service providers, and community-based agencies to supply the range of services noncustodial parents need to get a job or move up a career ladder. Gainful, stable employment enables these parents to pay regular financial support for their children.

Participants study in fields such as carpentry, computer or automotive repair, and welding. Classes also are offered in such life coping skills as how to interview for a job, retain employment, and manage finances. In addition, classes are available to help them strengthen their parenting skills, learn more about child development, and explore ways to be more involved in their children's lives.

The first year results are encouraging, with 450 noncustodial parents having completed job skills training and 360 of them (80 percent) employed and paying child support. "It's always good to have an extra choice, and this is a particularly good choice," says Superior Court Judge H. Gibb Flanders, Jr. "There aren't many situations where you can say there are no losers, but I think this is one."

Savings to taxpayers cited include decreased Medicaid and enforcement costs, and the costs of incarceration. Employers benefit through finding new sources of skilled labor, while the community gains from the boost to the local economy provided by employment.

If you would like more information about this program, contact Robert Johnson at (404) 657-9222.□

Robert Johnson is the State of Georgia Consultant to the Georgia Fatherhood Program.

Mississippi Access and Visitation Program

The Mississippi Access and Visitation Program (MAV-P) began in March, 1998, following receipt of a grant from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. The program is designed to promote supervised visitation of parents with their children at neutral, safe sites, usually Head Start centers.

Noncustodial parents who actively participate in their children's lives are more likely to pay child support.

"Children are the responsibility of both parents," says Mississippi's child support director Richard Harris, "and the MAV-P program provides noncustodial parents with an opportunity to get closer to their children." Also, noncustodial parents who actively participate in their children's lives, according to research findings, are more likely to pay child support.

To date, the staff has received more than 500 inquiries about the program, and has shared information about it through radio and television public service announcements, fatherhood meetings, brochures, and letters to their customers. If you would like more information about the program, contact Patricia Oluade at (601) 359-4875.□

More Keys to Success: Information Exchange By Internet

By Joe Gloystein

Enhancing electronic communications with our state/local partners is key to increasing child support program successes. That is why OCSE is working with its state partners to implement a framework for states to share nationwide information.

The goal is to integrate OCSE's business processes into an information exchange using the Internet browser. New Web-based programs will provide a user-friendly method of entering, updating, submitting, and viewing states' plans, profiles, and program data, as well as the Interstate Referral Guide. Multiple levels of access will be built in, including needed security.

OCSE is working with its state partners to implement a framework for states to share nationwide information.

An electronic state plan program will enable states to submit state plans through an electronic form accessed through the OCSE Internet site, and also to update their plans as necessary.

Likewise, a state profiles pilot program is under development to enable states to enter and update their state profile information through an electronic form accessible through the Internet. Additional features are being incorporated into this program based on the need to have directory information easily accessible to users. The Interstate Referral Guide, for example, is being added so that states can place interstate contact information in an Internet directory.

The state data program will enable states to enter and update their program data through an electronic form 157 that will be accessed via the Internet and shared with the respective OCSE Regional Offices and the Central Office. In the future, state program data could be used for performance and other reporting requirements.

New Web-based programs will provide a user-friendly method of entering, updating, submitting, and viewing states' plans, profiles, and program data.

These information exchange programs will be deployed over the next months. OCSE hopes to continue enhancing user-friendly interfaces for sharing information. Watch for additional information in future articles of the *Child Support Report* as we deploy each of these products, and others, into a true information exchange framework. For more information on these electronic information exchange programs, contact OCSE's Joe Gloystein at jgloystein@acf.dhhs.gov. □

Joe Gloystein is OCSE Team Leader for Electronic Communications.

Putting the Pieces Together

In April, OCSE hosted three regional workshops where state and federal program, policy, and systems staff met as a team to discuss child support topics with a diverse community of professionals, representatives from financial institutions, courts, and employer groups. The workshops were designed to assist participants in implementing the enhanced tools provided by welfare reform and other recent legislation.

Cited by participants as "most beneficial" were sessions on the financial institution data match program, including implementation status and multi-and in-state procedures, and automated administrative enforcement of interstate cases.

In addition, participants found especially helpful the discussions of computer based training and the National Electronic Child Support Resource System (NECSRS).

If you would like more information on these workshops, contact Mike Torpy at mtorpy@acf.dhhs.gov. □

Maryland Initiative for Fathers and Families

Recognition of the important role fathers play in the lives of children

Maryland's Child Support Enforcement Program has taken a leadership role in fostering recognition of the important role fathers play in the lives of children. Believing that all fathers can be important contributors to the well-being of their children and that parents are partners in raising their children even when they do not live in the same household, Maryland has implemented a multi-faceted fatherhood initiative.

Through public/private collaborations and partnerships with community-based organizations, the following fatherhood initiatives are successfully operating:

Young Fathers' Responsible Fathers' Program

Offers fathers services in personal development, parenting and life skills, health education, relationship building, and employment development.

Access and Visitation

Increases noncustodial parents' access to their children through mediation services and programmed activities, including parenting classes, development of parenting plans, advocacy, and employment skill building.

Baltimore City Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Project

Seeks through employment services to increase the ability of economically disadvantaged fathers to support their children financially; strengthens emotional support through an emphasis on parental involvement with children.

Maryland's Child Support Enforcement Program also sponsors and participates in the annual Maryland Male Involvement Conference, which provides information on research findings and successful father-focused programming. For more information on father and family programming in Maryland, contact Donna Sims at (410) 767-7876.□

Dads Make A Difference

Developed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services' Child Support Division, **Dads Make A Difference** is a paternity education project focused on educating youth about the importance of fathers in children's lives. In Maryland, the Child Support Enforcement Program and the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension have formed a partnership to pilot the program.

Dads Make A Difference seeks to help young teens make good decisions about parenthood, including deferring it until they are financially and emotionally ready.

In this interactive model, older teens ages 16-18 are trained to work with middle school-aged teens in a variety of settings including classrooms, community organizations, and prevention programs. Young people are given an opportunity to discuss the importance of fathers in the lives of children, the legal, financial, and emotional responsibilities of parenting; and the risks teens and pre-teens face along the path to young adulthood.

Dads Make A Difference seeks to help young teens make good decisions about parenthood, including deferring it until they are financially and emotionally ready.

The project will be implemented over a five-year period. In the first year, focus will be on two sites in Prince George's County (half of the middle and high schools) and the Tri-County area on the Lower Eastern Shore (all of the schools in Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties).

During the second year, it will be extended to the remaining schools in Prince George's County, and a community-based model will be piloted in the Tri-County area. Based on the evaluation of these first two years, a plan will be developed for other jurisdictions in the last three years of the pilot.□

Maryland System Certified

The certification of Maryland's automated system brings to 41 the number of states whose systems have been certified by OCSE.□

Virginia Staffing Standards Increase Productivity

By: Nick Young and Todd Arreson

In 1993 Virginia received a federal grant to test whether additional staff could make a significant difference in performance and productivity in a local child support office. Virginia's child support program features administrative process, specialty caseworkers (Intake, Enforcement, etc.), 22 local offices, and a certified automated statewide computer system.

We selected two offices to receive additional staff. One had a caseload of less than 13,000 (considered small in Virginia), the other a caseload of more than 22,000 (large by Virginia standards).

Delphi Technique

Using a technique called Delphi, we arrived at a staffing standard for each office. Delphi is a systematic process of professional estimation. Key elements of this technique include establishing a panel of experienced case specialists to develop questionnaires listing all case related tasks for each of six functional specialties, and administering several rounds of the questionnaires to all experienced specialists.

The specialists answer the following question for each task in their specialty: How much time is needed to perform this task at an acceptable level of quality and in compliance with federal regulations and state policy?

Finding the small office to be understaffed by 33 percent and the large office by 28 percent, we increased staff accordingly. The results below reflect the outcomes from the small, Fredericksburg office. (Data is not yet available from the larger office.)

Results

Over a fifteen-month post-staffing period compared with a similar pre-staffing period, Fredericksburg achieved the following results:

- Collections per employee per month increased from $9,499 to $15,380 (62 percent);
- Wage withholdings per employee increased an average of 29 percent, locates, 72 percent, and paternity establishments, 87 percent,
- Total collections increased by $1.08 million; and
- Cost effectiveness—net $ benefits to $ costs—increased by $1.80.

During the overall 15 month staffing period, employee satisfaction, as measured by an in-house instrument, increased by 19 percent, while customer perceptions of employee performance increased as follows:

- Staff courtesy, 14 percent;
- Staff helpfulness, 21 percent; and
- Case timeliness, 37 percent.

Using new staff to help clean up weak areas of the caseload provided these staff with solid training and skills.

How the Fredericksburg Office Did It

On receiving 14 additional staff for the 15-month period, the office had all new staff take the standard one-week overview of Virginia child support enforcement. Next, using new staff to assist case specialists, a "strategic review" of the entire caseload was conducted.

After identifying weak areas of the caseload, specialists gave new staff "hands on" training in the exact steps to take to bring a case into compliance with federal regulations and state policy, or to close it if warranted. Adopting a perspective that using new staff to help clean up weak areas of the caseload would provide these staff with solid training and skills, managers subsequently shifted new staff to clean up other weak areas.

The result: increased productivity, happier staff, and more satisfied customers. An additional long term benefit, we think, is more and longer lasting efficiencies in caseload management.

If you would like more information about this experiment in productivity, call Todd Arreson at (804) 692-1463. □

Nick Young is Director of the Virginia Division of Child Support Todd Arreson is the Project Manager for the Staffing Demonstration

Research Affirms Dads

What research is telling us about fathers

- Fathers who pay child support tend to have children who do better in school, both in terms of school achievement and behavior.
- Greater involvement by fathers in routine activities with their children (eating meals together, helping with homework, etc.) is associated with fewer behavior problems, greater sociability, and better school performance by children and adolescents.
- Fathers who are able to provide economically for their children are more likely to stay invested in their marriages or partner relationships and more likely to be engaged with and nurturing of their children—even if they live apart from them.
- Fathers are more likely to promote young children's intellectual and social development through physical play, while mothers are more likely to do so through talking and teaching.

Fathers who pay child support tend to have children who do better in school.

- While fathers from different racial and ethnic groups differ in the amount and type of involvement they have with their children, certain fathering roles are valued across major racial, ethnic, and cultural groupings. These include fathers as economic providers, protectors, caregivers and teachers.□

Source: Child Trends, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that studies children and families.

Happy Father's Day to All!

Posters Win NCSEA Award

Maryland's Child Support Enforcement program has collaborated with "Campaign For Our Children," a nonprofit organization working to prevent unintended adolescent pregnancies, to produce a public service campaign. The campaign, which targets 9-14 year-old adolescents by using a variety of methods to communicate abstinence-based messages to the young people, their parents, and their communities, has been recognized by NCSEA as the best of its kind in the country.

The campaign's posters are available as a set or individually. For copies or for more information, contact Emily Papa, 120 West Fayette St., Suite 1200, Baltimore, MD 21201, telephone (410) 576-9015.□

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Child Support Report

Ohio Judicial Conference Highlights Interstate Enforcement

Ohio's Office of Child Support and the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement sponsored a recent conference on interstate enforcement for judges and magistrates.

The information-packed event attracted nearly 70 participants, including judges, magistrates, and representatives from the Ohio Child Support Directors' Association, as well as Federal and State staff.

Ohio's Acting Child Support Deputy Director Barbara L. Saunders welcomed participants to two lively days covering all aspects of interstate enforcement. The Honorable Larry Holtz, OCSE's Court Liaison Officer, and a retired judge, provided opening remarks on the evolving roles of the judiciary and child support.

Also included were sessions on UIFSA, paternity, fatherhood, access and visitation, and medical support. A conference highlight was a spirited discussion on strengthening fragile families by Ron Mincy of the Ford Foundation and Jacqueline Boggess of the Center for Fathers and Public Policy.

For more information contact Cynthia Lucas, Ohio Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support, at (614) 752-9740.☐

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Shannon

(202) 401-4626 Fax(202) 401-5559 Internet: PShannon@acf.dhhs.gov

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If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report****, please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement Vol. XXI, No. 7, July 1999

Colorado CSE Explores Ways to Serve Prisoners

By Jessica Pearson

Colorado's Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) is exploring child support policies that may work with incarcerated parents. Every year, approximately 4,400 offenders return to the community, 79 percent of whom are estimated to have children. Based on an automated match of cases in the child support and Department of Corrections (DOC) systems, DCSE discovered that four percent of nonpaying obligors are currently incarcerated or on parole.

Visitation Classes for Corrections Personnel and Incarcerated Parents

In April, 1998, DCSE coordinated its first day-long training program for pre-release counselors and educators at Colorado's prisons dealing with the topics of child support, visitation (or parenting time as it is termed in Colorado), welfare reform, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect. Since then, abbreviated two and three hour sessions dealing with the topics of child support and visitation have been held with prison staff and inmates in six prisons and five half-way houses.

Some sessions are held in conjunction with lengthier pre-release programs that offer help in managing anger, learning to communicate, coping with the stresses of life on the outside, and parenting. More sessions are scheduled.

The co-presenters are Christopher Handaway, a family law attorney with a strong background in public legal education, and Robert Conklin, Colorado's paternity coordinator and a former child support worker. The population targeted for training sessions is made up of parents scheduled to be released within a few months and case managers who interact with parents during their incarceration.

Jessica Pearson

Conklin and Handaway tell prison staff and incarcerated parents about the legal papers parents need to file to obtain visitation rights and about supervised visitation centers where parents can visit with their children and try to establish a good track record. They describe the child support options prisoners face and how to obtain genetic tests, modify high child support orders, and negotiate a longer time frame to pay off arrearages.

They also describe the new welfare and child support environment that prisoners and the mothers of their children face: time-limited benefits, strict cooperation requirements, new hire reporting, and other rigorous enforcement remedies.

Both Handaway and Conklin characterize their appearances before prison audiences as extremely rewarding because "the inmates are so grateful and hungry for information."

Continued on page 2, "Colorado."

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Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

42 USC 653

Colorado

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Establishing Responsive Child Support Orders and Collecting From Incarcerated Parents

Next, the Colorado DCSE will be working with incarcerated parents to establish and modify child support orders that reflect actual earnings. Under Colorado law, when a noncustodial parent goes to prison, the court has the ability to establish child support orders based on actual earnings, imputed earnings, or pre-incarceration wages.

Colorado is a state with a county-administered child support program, and this leads to a lot of variation across its 63 counties. In those counties where incarceration is viewed as a form of "voluntary unemployment" and order levels are established at imputed or pre-prison wage levels, debt can quickly mount.

In this phase of the demonstration project, DCSE will routinely present information about paternity and child support to all individuals who enter the prison system.

The in-person overture will be made while prisoners are at a central site for intake and diagnostic work, before they are dispersed to one of DOC's 22 facilities. Prisoners will be told about the child support system and that their child support orders will continue during their incarceration. They will be told how to request genetic tests and/or review/modification of their orders.

The population targeted for training sessions is made up of parents scheduled to be released within a few months and case managers who interact with parents during their incarceration.

Child support technicians will assist interested parents with their measures, and procedures will be developed to deduct child support and debt payments from inmate accounts at the prisons. (Inmate pay in Colorado State prisons ranges from 7.5 cents per hour to minimum wage, with the average prisoner earning 85 cents per day.)

Cultivating Employment, Child Support Payment, and Connections with Children

Still another aspect of the project will involve the establishment of specialized employment and child support and parenting services for incarcerated parents upon their release from prison. Probation officers and community corrections personnel will refer released parents to a special program where they will receive employment assistance. They will also meet with an outposted child support worker who will review their records and explain their situation and options, including the possible modification of orders to reflect actual earnings.

Finally, they will meet with a case manager who will be equipped to help them with parenting issues, including linking up with supervised visitation centers, joining peer support groups, exploring mediation, and filing the papers needed to pursue access and visitation. Participants will be monitored to gauge user reactions as well as patterns of employment, child support payments, and contact.

Colorado DCSE wants to be part of the solution, not problem, for families with an incarcerated parent.

The Colorado DCSE wants to be part of the solution, not problem, for families with an incarcerated parent, and these approaches promise to be steps in the right direction.

If you would like more information about this project, contact Don Welch, a Policy Specialist with Colorado's child support program, at (303) 866-5996. ☐

Jessica Pearson, Ph.D., is Director of the Denver-based Center for Policy Research.

Grandparents and Visitation Rights

The Virginia Court of Appeals recently ruled that in certain situations grandparents have visitation rights in divorce cases. In this case, the child's mother and father divorced in 1995 and sole custody was awarded to the mother. The father requested that his mother (the grandmother) be permitted to visit the child. The lower court granted the grandmother the right to visit her grandchild one Saturday a month.

The Court of Appeals made a legal distinction in granting the visitation rights to the grandmother in this case. If only one parent of a divorced couple objects to grandparent visitation rights, the court will determine if the visits are in the best interest of the child, as they were found to be in this case. ☐

With permission from "Child Support Bulletin," June, 1995, The Children's Foundation, Washington, DC.

New Hampshire's New Hire Project: Targeting Independent Contractors Pays Off

Collections Increase More Than One Million Dollars

By Kathleen L. Kerr

New Hampshire's initiative for collecting child support from noncustodial parents who are independent contractors generated an estimated increase in collections of over a million dollars between October 1997 and October 1998. According to a study conducted by the Federal DHHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), New Hampshire's overall collections increased by $5.3 million, with 20 percent of that ($1.065 million) attributable to collections from independent contractors.

Welfare reform legislation includes requirements for all employers to report new hires to a designated agency. States also must conduct data matches between their child support case registry and the new hire directory. To comply, New Hampshire selected its Department of Employment Security (DES) to be the State agency for reporting new hires.

New hire reports are submitted to DES, which daily submits the data to the child support agency for matching the noncustodial parent's name and Social Security number. When a match is found, a notice is sent both to the payor and the employer, with the notice to the employer containing instructions to garnish the employee's wages.

Adding independent contractors to the [new hire requirement] did not significantly impact operating costs or worker caseloads.

Taking the new hire requirement one step further, New Hampshire enacted legislation requiring employers to report the hiring of employees and independent contractors with contracts in excess of $2,500. Self-employed payors are often among the most difficult to collect support from, and businesses, though not required, are encouraged to report all independent contractors regardless of the contract amount.

Since the entire process for attaching earnings and sending notification letters to employers and payors is automated, adding independent contractors to the function

New Hampshire Child Support Director Kathleen Kerr

did not significantly impact operating costs or worker caseloads. Moreover, new hire is a valuable parent locator tool. Our records indicate that the program consistently provides current address information on the self-employed.

Besides an increase in current collections, benefits include a decrease in outstanding amounts owed. For example, an OIG random sample review of 33 independent contractors identified in the new hire data match revealed that 31 of them owed an average of $4,879 in past due child support. (The other two were found not to be delinquent.) Once brought to light, the potential for collection of the past due amounts of these independent contractors increases dramatically.

If you would like more information about New Hampshire's new hire initiative, call Sarah Kreutzer at (603) 271-4750. ☐

Kathleen Kerr is the Director of New Hampshire's child support program.

OCSE and SSA Collaborate to Improve Quality of Data

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) are collaborating in a pilot project to improve the quality of data and encourage employer participation in new hire reporting. The Social Security Number (SSN) Feedback Pilot Project is an outgrowth of discussions among OCSE, SSA, states, and employer groups working together to improve new hire reporting.

The project initially will be conducted in Illinois and Massachusetts. Beginning in August 1999, and continuing for one year, SSA will promptly inform employers in these two States when they submit a new hire report that contains an incorrect name and SSN combination. To make this determination, SSA will compare submissions with its files of correct SSNs.

The project is designed to give employers an opportunity to correct their records shortly after an employee is hired, so that they will be able to submit correct data for any future filings with federal or state agencies. As a result, federal and state agencies will receive more accurate data, and employers will have a reduced administrative burden in correcting employee records at the year's end.

The project is designed to give employers an opportunity to correct their records shortly after an employee is hired, so that they will be able to submit correct data for any future filings with federal or state agencies.

Workers also will benefit. Using the correct name and SSN combination in filings will ensure that an employee receives all the government benefits to which he or she is entitled.

OCSE and SSA will work with the pilot states and employers to evaluate the benefits and costs of this early notification system. If results are positive, the plan is to implement the project nationwide.

If you have questions about the SSN Feedback Pilot Project, contact OCSE's Carol Callahan at (202) 401-4569. ☐

On-Line Support Guidelines in Arizona

The Arizona Supreme Court's Domestic Relations Unit has created a companion Website to the State's child support guidelines. The new website contains a calculation program that can be used by attorneys, courts, or persons representing themselves to compute child support.

The calculator demystifies the application of child support guidelines and simplifies the mathematical computation, enabling parents easily and correctly to compute a child support amount. The expectation is that allowing parents independently to verify the computation of support will reduce prolonged conflict over the financial support of the children and facilitate settlement.

A web-based application has several advantages. It is readily accessible by citizens—those currently residing in the State and former residents with child support orders that were issued in Arizona. End users do not have to purchase software that could potentially restrict usage or discourage requests for modification of older orders. And having the application available via the Supreme Court's Website enables the Court to maintain quality control, ensuring that changes to the application occur in a timely fashion. ☐

With permission, from the DR Quarterly, *Vol. V, No. 1, March 31, 1999, published by the Domestic Relations Unit, Court Services Division, Administrative Office of the Courts, Arizona Supreme Court.*

FPLS Team Wins Award

OCSE's Expanded Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) Team, under Donna Bonar's leadership, has won the prestigious Hammer Award from the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. The award, presented for achieving results, cutting red tape, partnering with other agencies and the private sector, and putting customers first, cites an increase of $3 million for children in the first 3 months of the effort. By getting the National Directory of New Hires up and running on time and under budget, the FPLS team, OCSE, and the Social Security Administration have improved the lives of the nation's children and families in ways that are now being recognized nationally. ☐

California Court of Appeal Holds That Child Support Defendants Are Not Entitled to Appointed Counsel

By: John S. Higgins, Jr.

In *Clark v. Superior Court* (1998) 62 Cal.App.4th 576, California's Fourth District Court of Appeal held that defendants in child support (nonpaternity) actions brought by the district attorney are not entitled to appointed counsel.

Renee Clark and several other noncustodial parents in civil support actions brought by the Orange County District Attorney petitioned the Court of Appeal for a writ to require the appointment of counsel in their cases. After extensive briefing, both by the parties and by *amici curiae* on both sides of the case, the Court of Appeal held that they were not so entitled.

The Court of Appeal noted that Lassiter *presumes a right to appointed counsel only where the defendant's liberty is at stake.*

[In arriving at its decision, the Court of Appeal pointed to the] due process analysis set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *Lassiter v. Department of Social Services* (1981) 452 U.S. 18.

Lassiter employed a three-part due process analysis in determining when counsel is required in cases *where the defendant's physical liberty is not at stake.* Under *Lassiter*, due process depends on a weighing of the private interests involved, the risk that the procedures used will lead to erroneous decisions, and the government's interest. The Court of Appeal noted that the *Lassiter* test presumes a right to appointed counsel only where the defendant's liberty is at stake.

The private interests in civil child support actions involve money. The court noted that monetary interests did not have the same status as liberty interests (staying out of jail).

In evaluating the risk of erroneous decisions, the Court of Appeal noted that the child support guideline statute is essentially a mathematics problem. Thus, the result of litigation is less dependent on the quality of legal representation than it might be otherwise. . . .

The court also pointed out that contempt is unavailable to enforce reimbursement judgments, citing *Crider v. Superior Court* (1993) 15 Cal.App.4th 227. In sum, the court determined that there was a "less than average risk" of erroneous results as they might be affected by the quality of legal representation.

As to the government's interest, the Court determined that it "clearly and decisively" weighed against taxpayer-funded counsel, because the purpose of Title IV-D of the Social Security Act . . . was to save welfare dollars. . . The balancing of the *Lassiter* factors resulted in the conclusion that there is no due process right to appointed counsel. □

The above summarizes an article from Support Line, *a quarterly family support law update, published by the California District Attorneys Association. Legal citations have in most instances been removed. For the full article, see Vol. 2, No. 2, 1998. Used with permission.*

John Higgins is a Tulare County (CA) Deputy District Attorney.

Faith-Based Effort Bears Fruit

Welfare reform legislation permits government agencies to partner with faith communities in programs of mutual concern. Through the efforts of Tom Starnes, Advocacy Relations Specialist, OCSE has entered into cooperative agreements with the YMCA of America (see May '99 *CSR*) and the United Methodist Church.

Recently, the Church's Baltimore-Washington Conference issued a program handbook on child support enforcement (CSE) for its local churches and membership. Entitled *Family & Child Support*, it contains an overview of the CSE program, a section on what individuals can do to help meet the needs of children and families, and a letter of greeting from OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross.

For a copy, contact Dan Houlahan at OCSE's Kansas City Regional Office (816) 426-3981 X 195. □

Quarterly Conference Calendar

August

8-12 *NCSEA 48th Annual Conference & Exposition*, Palmer House Hilton & Towers, Chicago, IL, Heather Tonks (202) 624-8180.

25-27 *Georgia CSE Staff Training Seminar*, Hyatt Savannah, Savannah, GA, Gale Moon (404) 657-3866.

September

13-15 *OCSE 9th CSE Training Conference*, Double Tree Hotel, Pentagon City/National Airport, Arlington, VA, Bertha J. Hammett (202) 401-5292.

22-24 *Nebraska CSE Association 18th Annual Training Conference*, Ramada Inn, Kearney, NE, Janice Sorensen (402) 341-4554.

2-24 *Wisconsin CSE Association Fall Training Conference and Legal Track*, Stone Harbor Resort, Sturgeon Bay, WI, Marybeth Schuster (920) 746-2231.

22-26 *12th National Conference of The Children's Rights Council*, Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, Alexandria, VA, (202) 547-6227.

October

3-6 *Western Interstate CSE Council (WICSEC) Annual Training Conference*, Holiday Inn University Plaza, Springfield, MO, Jane Williams (573) 751-7079.

12-15 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting*, Hyatt Regency Alicante, Anaheim, CA, Noanne St. Jean (209) 582-3211 X 2403.

November

2-5 *Missouri CSE Association*, Holiday Inn Westport, St. Louis, MO, Debra Jones (816) 881-3446. □

KIDS COUNT Data Book Now Available

For a free copy of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT* Data Book: 1999, Call the Foundation's publications line at (410) 223-2890, or send your request to Attn: 1999 *KIDS COUNT* Data Book, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21202. □

Ohio's Access and Visitation Program

By: Wendy Fenneman

Now in the second year of its access and visitation pilot, Ohio has 10 county child support agencies participating. The counties (Cuyahoga, Erie, Green, Lucas, Marion, Mercer, Stark, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, and Washington) range in size and location from small and rural (Tuscarawas and Washington) to large and urban (Cuyahoga and Lucas) and administer their own programs.

Projects include mediation, supervised visitation, neutral drop-off and pick-up, and parenting education.

Most of the 10 child support agencies have partnered with their local courts, sheriff's departments, children's service agencies, and community nonprofit organizations. Projects include mediation, supervised visitation, neutral drop-off and pick-up, and parenting education. If you would like more information about Ohio's access and visitation projects, call Wendy Fenneman at (614) 728-6849. □

Wendy Fenneman is a Child Support Supervisor in the Ohio Department of Human Services.

Single Fathers

The number of single fathers grew 25 percent between 1995 and 1998, from 1.7 million to 2.1 million, while the number of single mothers remained constant at about 9.8 million. Consequently, men comprised 1 in 6 of the nation's 11.9 million single parents in 1998, up from 1 in 7 in 1995 and 1 in 10 in 1980. The 2.1 million fathers who had custody of their children were less likely to have been awarded child support than custodial mothers were and less likely to receive at least a portion of payments owed. □

Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Nova Scotia Declared First Reciprocating Canadian Province

By: Stephen Grant

The Province of Nova Scotia, a political subdivision of Canada, has been declared a "foreign reciprocating country" for child support enforcement by the United States.

Section 459A of Title IV-D of the Social Security Act [42USC659A] authorizes the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to determine that a foreign country has established, or has undertaken to establish, support enforcement procedures available at no cost to residents of the United States.

These services must include the establishment of paternity and support orders for children and custodial parents, enforcement of support orders, and collection and distribution of support payments under such orders.

On December 18, 1998, the Governor in Council made an order declaring the United States to be a reciprocating State for the purpose of the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act of Nova Scotia. The effective reciprocity date is December 18, 1998, pursuant to the U.S. declaration of May 14, 1999.

Requests for services may be sent to the Nova Scotia Central Authority, attention Paulette Inness, Maintenance Enforcement Program, P.O. Box 803, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2V2, Canada, Telephone: 902-424-8032; Fax: 902-424-2153.

This first federal reciprocity agreement with a Canadian jurisdiction builds upon a broad history of systemic improvements in Canadian support enforcement procedures and increasing Canadian cooperation with United States enforcement officials. For further information about the Nova Scotia reciprocity declaration or other international child support enforcement matters, contact Stephen Grant at (202) 260-5943. □

Stephen Grant is OCSE's International Child Support Officer.

Establishing Paternity: Progress Being Made

To improve collections and better the lives of children, a major child support goal is to increase paternity establishment for those children born outside marriage. Examples of progress:

- Paternity establishments rose to over 1.45 million in 1998, an increase of 185 percent from the 516,000 in 1992. This was also an increase of 12.1 percent from the 1.3 million paternities established in 1997.

A major factor in the increase in paternities established has been the success of the in-hospital paternity acknowledgment program.

- For the third year in a row, out-of-wedlock birth rates declined. Births to unmarried women declined to 1.25 million in 1997, the latest figures available. This was 2 percent lower than in 1996 and 6 percent lower than 1994 when the rate was at its highest.

- A major factor in the increase in paternities established has been the success of the in-hospital paternity acknowledgment program, which requires the cooperation of a newly born child's parents. In 1998 over 614,000 paternities were voluntarily established in hospitals and other similar settings. This was an increase of 26.2 percent from the previous year's 486,786 and demonstrates that many parents want to take responsibility for their children.

With more paternities being established than children being born out of wedlock, progress is being made in reducing the number of children who do not have a legally established father in their lives. Such a relationship is necessary for securing the financial support children need and deserve for their healthy development and sense of well-being. □

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Child Support Report

Child Support Report
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Final Rules on Case Closure and Paternity Establishment

Final rules on case closure criteria and paternity establishment (See Federal Register, 64 FR 11810 and 64FR 11802) clarify situations in which states may close cases, making it easier for them to close unworkable cases, and address new statutory requirements for a state's voluntary paternity acknowledgment procedures.

The case closure rule revises federal regulations outlining criteria for closing child support enforcement cases and makes technical changes to 45 CFR 303.11 in response to a presidential directive to reduce or eliminate mandated burdens on states, other governmental agencies, or the private sector.

The final rule on paternity establishment implements part of the paternity establishment provisions contained in section 331 of the welfare reform act as amended by section 5539 of Public Law 105-33 and includes identifying the types of entities other than hospitals and birth record agencies that may be allowed to offer these services. States will be required to adopt laws and procedures that are in accordance with the statutory and regulatory provisions. ☐

Child Support Report is a publication of the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services.

Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Shannon

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet: PShannon@acf.dhhs.gov

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If you have enjoyed this issue of ***Child Support Report****, please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 8, August 1999

Reaching Out to State Courts

By: Kay Farley

Kay Farley

State courts continue to play an important role in the Child Support Enforcement program. In every state, courts determine amounts and issue orders for child support and medical support. Even in administrative process states, courts handle nonchild support cases and appeals of child support administrative orders.

In most states, the support orders that must be registered with the State Case Registries begin in the courts. Courts also are custodians of information about protective orders in family violence cases. And in some states, courts have been and continue to be heavily involved in processing child support payments.

In recognizing the need to encourage partnerships between child support agencies and courts, OCSE contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to sponsor a national symposium in 1998, bringing together representatives of child support agencies and courts to discuss the child support requirements of the 1996 welfare reform legislation. All 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia participated in the Denver-based symposium. The focus was on judicial education, with nationally recognized experts in the child support enforcement field serving as faculty.

To build on the partnerships that began in Denver, OCSE, with NCSC, sponsored a followup meeting in Chicago in June, 1999. This meeting featured joint discussion and planning around six topics:

- The use of state incentive payments;
- Cooperation between child support and courts;
- Welfare reform automation requirements;
- The Federal Case Registry and the family violence indicator;
- The availability of child support funding for courts; and
- The handling of nonchild support cases.

Following the meetings, court attendees reported a better understanding of the requirements of welfare reform and the potential for child support funding through cooperative agreements. Child support attendees praised the opportunity to get acquainted with court officials and benefit from a new perspective on court operation. In many instances, the symposium enabled the beginning of a dialogue between child support agencies and the courts.

These meetings highlighted the importance of courts to child support enforcement and the need for the two programs to enhance their partnership efforts to help America's children and families. If you would like more information, contact Kay Farley at (703) 841-0200 X 5601. □

Kay Farley is Government Relations Representative for the National Center for State Courts.

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Office of Child Support Enforcement

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My View

Commissioner David Gray Ross

Child Support and the Courts: Natural Born Partners

States are required to have in effect and use, in interstate and intrastate cases, expedited processes to establish paternity and to establish and enforce support orders. Regulations define expedited processes as "administrative or expedited judicial processes or both which increase effectiveness" and meet certain processing time standards.

Paternities and orders established by means other than full judicial process are accorded the "same force and effect under state law as paternities and orders established by full judicial process within the state."

State court involvement in child support programs is extensive and fundamental.

Even with a state's adoption of an administrative process, however, the judiciary continues to be a vital part of child support. As William E. Hewitt, a senior research associate at the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), points out: "The role of state courts in national child support program reform efforts has not been well understood." State court involvement in child support programs is extensive and fundamental.

While a child support system in a state may be described as "entirely an administrative process: the courts are not involved," the reality is that every state court system is involved in child support and will continue to be as long as divorce is the business of the state courts. According to NCSC, about 1.5 million judgments of divorce are entered in state courts annually, and more than half the divorce decrees include orders of support.

Moreover, even states that have adopted an administrative process (not all have done so) must often rely on courts for data collection, judicial review, and other matters.

As a former circuit court judge in Maryland, it has pleased me that OCSE has, over the years, maintained a good relationship with courts. In recent years we have stepped up our efforts to bolster the partnership between the child support program and courts. The conference last September in Denver and the recent followup judicial meeting in Chicago, summarized elsewhere in this issue, are perhaps the most visible manifestations of our efforts.

OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross

We have stepped up our efforts to bolster the partnership between the child support program and courts.

Others include a video on OCSE's relationship with courts; a much-requested court information outreach packet; articles placed in leading judicial and court publications; a court outreach team whose members speak regularly at conferences; and a forthcoming, eagerly awaited, judicial bench book.

We intend to continue our efforts, as this special court/judicial issue of *Child Support Report* indicates. After you have read through it, take a moment to drop us a note and let us know what you think. □

Unemployment Insurance Crossmatch Project

OCSE/SESAs Partnership Enjoys Early Success

In response to requests from employer organizations, OCSE, in partnership with State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) has developed the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Crossmatch Project. The results from this project, which will be shared with the employer community, are expected to reduce employers' unemployment insurance trust fund contributions, providing evidence that participating in the New Hire Reporting Program directly benefits businesses.

The crossmatch programs perform an automated comparison between a state's New Hire W-4 records and the database of UI benefit recipients.

States already using the UI crossmatch process have shown early success. For example:

- In calendar year 1998, Pennsylvania identified 4,289 overpayments with a dollar value of $2.3 million;
- In fiscal year 1998, Texas identified 2,558 overpayments with a dollar value of $1.2 million; and
- Between July and December, 1998, Georgia identified 1,147 overpayments with a dollar value of $225,577; and
- In the same period, Utah identified 213 overpayments with a dollar value of $126,058.

SESAs can use the New Hire W-4 records in their State Directories of New Hires to identify overpayments against UI claimants who have been receiving benefits to which they are not entitled. The crossmatch programs perform an automated comparison between a state's New Hire W-4 records and the database of UI benefit recipients.

When a match is found, the SESA will investigate whether the UI benefit recipient has started a new job and whether that recipient is still entitled to any benefits. If an overpayment is confirmed, the SESA can request the refund of benefits received in error and prevent future overpayments. Reducing overpayments saves money for states and employers.

The states' SESAs either already operate or plan to develop New Hire crossmatch programs. OCSE is working closely with the states to encourage use of this process and to capture and evaluate the results.

If you have questions about the UI Crossmatch Project, contact Carol Callahan at (202) 401-6969, ccallahan@acf.dhhs.gov; or Jenny Menna at (202) 401-5745, jmenna@acf.dhhs.gov.□

OCSE's National Training Conference

. . . . . *Just Around the Corner*

This year's National CSE Training Conference (the 9th) will be held **September 14-15,** 1999, at the Doubletree Hotel, Pentagon City, Arlington, VA.

The theme is *Interstate: Crossing the Line for the Children of America.*

The conference is designed for all state and federal child support professionals. While the emphasis will be on interstate case processing solutions, we will continue our focus on technology-enabled/distance learning.

Time is short but you still can register for this important event. The registration fee of $100 is eligible for Federal Financial Participation at the regular matching rate.

For registration or hotel information, call Isabell Howes at (202) 314-3471. For other information contact Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292.□

New Outreach Products

OCSE is always looking for new and innovative ways to help states and court personnel understand and implement the requirements of new child support legislation, including developing new outreach products. Over the past year, new publications, videos, presentations, and training courses have been developed and distributed by OCSE. Some of these products can be found at the OCSE website at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse. For further information, contact Mike Torpey at (202) 401-5310.□

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State Child Support Enforcement Programs Join Forces with Georgia, Kansas, and New Hampshire Enhance Communication,

Georgia

By Jim Jester

The State of Georgia is working to enhance the relationship between its judiciary and child support enforcement effort. Georgia's Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Division and the State's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) have entered into a cooperative agreement to focus State resources on making Georgia's child support program more successful.

The AOC, as a partner with child support, is dedicating a staff liaison to this effort who will concentrate on improving communications and gaining support in compiling the State Case Registry. With the AOC liaison on board, both CSE and the superior court judges and clerks will have an intermediary to assist them with problem solving, long range planning, and implementation.

The cooperative agreement will include additional data entry capabilities . . . in establishing and maintaining the State Case Registry.

"We are very excited about our new partnership with the AOC," says CSE Director Dan Elmore. "I believe this will strengthen our already close working relationship with superior court judges and clerks."

With the State Case Registry changes set for implementation this summer, along with collection of information on nonIV D cases, the cooperative agreement will include additional data entry capabilities that should be an asset in establishing and maintaining the State Case Registry.

The initiative is expected to begin operations on September 1, 1999. We hope to take advantage of the experiences of other states that have already developed joint programs between their child support enforcement and judicial branch agencies. For more information, contact Jim Jester at (404) 651-7616. □

Jim Jester is Liaison for Child Support for Georgia's Administrative Office of the Courts.

Kansas

By Mark Glenn

The Kansas Supreme Court's Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) and the State's Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS), which houses the child support program, have developed partnerships in the areas of support enforcement, payment collections, distribution systems, automated systems interface, guidelines, and in the development and implementation of the State Disbursement Unit.

In 1976, SRS contracted with individual District Court Trustees to pursue the enforcement of child support obligations. OJA was created in 1977 when the Kansas Legislature unified the 105 county courts under the administration of the Kansas Supreme Court. Following the 1984 federal child support amendments, Kansas passed legislation allowing SRS to contract with OJA for enforcement operations and payment information management across the State.

Presently, SRS funds numerous positions in the Judicial Branch. Approximately fifty-two personnel in the district courts process child support payments, docket notices of assignment, and perform general child support case management. Eight additional positions in OJA staff the development, implementation, and operational support of the courts' automated accounting and statistical systems, and perform general administrative functions.

The partnership developed out of the Kansas requirement that all child support payments (IV-D and non IV-D) be processed through the Clerk of the District Court. While a Kansas statute allows the court to waive this requirement, thereby permitting direct payment of child support between the parties, very few child support obligations bypass the District Court Clerk. While this method of payment will change when the Kansas State Distribution Unit (to be known as the Kansas Payment Center) begins operations, the District Court Clerk will continue to play an important role in child support case management.

Today, the agreements between SRS and OJA focus on managing the interface between the courts' accounting systems and the child support automated system. A computer extract of data detailing the day's receipts at each of the court locations receiving child support pay-

Continued on page 5, "Kansas."

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Courts to Improve Services, Establish Dialogue. Partnerships in Support, and Understanding of Each Other's Programs

New Hampshire

By Catherine Shanelaris

Cooperation between the courts and child support is crucial for establishing a dialogue on how to better deliver child support services. Maintaining a consistent flow of financial support is a challenge faced by every family.

The job of the court and the child support agency has only begun with the signing of the order. Through continued collaboration, creative solutions can be explored and common goals achieved which can make a difference in a family's life.

In New Hampshire, regular liaison meetings now occur between the courts and the child support division. Support enforcement officers routinely meet with judges to discuss the difficulties of enforcing orders when the noncustodial parent is underemployed or self-employed. The support enforcement officers learn what facts and information the court needs to create an effective enforcement order and how to present the evidence to the court. The court gains an understanding of the needs and functions of the division and the families it assists.

In New Hampshire, regular liaison meetings now occur between the courts and the child support division.

New Hampshire credits The National Symposium on Children, Courts, and the Federal Child Support Program, held in Denver last year, for this partnership. The Symposium provided a forum for collaboration between the courts and child support agencies and made possible a setting outside the courtroom where the barriers of formality could be set aside. Attendees could speak at length about issues each group had regarding how to better meet the needs of families.

The discussions were positive and promoted a relationship of trust between the division and the courts. In particular, the symposium provided an opportunity for court staff to recognize how they fit into the larger picture of child support enforcement, which in turn facilitated the completion of New Hampshire's State Case Registry. It also opened the door for further discussions about how to streamline current procedures to achieve the best results for as many people as possible in need of services.

The follow up Symposium, held in Bloomingdale, Illinois, provided additional opportunity to interact and explore common issues. Further growth of this partnership depends on keeping open the lines of communication between the two programs. If you would like more information contact Catherine Shanelaris at (603) 271-7816.□

Catherine Shanelaris is Chief Staff Attorney in New Hampshire's Division of Child Support Services.

Kansas

Continued from page 4

ments is transferred from the court accounting system to the child support automated system. Although this arrangement generally works well, it requires a great deal of coordination of policies, common data file definitions, and considerable technical support from OJA and SRS staff. There are very few days when either a District Court Clerk or OJA support staff are not in contact with the Child Support Receivables unit of SRS to troubleshoot a problem.

The degree to which this arrangement works for the Kansas obligors and obligees depends on the willingness and ability of personnel at all levels to work with colleagues across the two branches of government. Clear communications, common goals, flexibility, mutual respect and understanding, along with a dose of humor, have helped this partnership succeed. Together, SRS and OJA continue to work toward making the complex business of child support a useful service of government for Kansas families. If you would like more information, contact Mark Gleeson at (785) 291-3224.□

Mark Gleeson is Family and Children Program Coordinator in the Kansas Supreme Court's Office of Judicial Administration.

New Safeguards for Family Violence Victims

By Jane Mickens

Family violence, a term that, within OCSE, denotes domestic violence and child abuse collectively, remains a serious problem in America today. It impacts families of all races, classes, educational backgrounds, religions, and geographic locations. Safety is a key desire of its victims. Many factors, however, can prevent that desire from becoming a reality.

Economic dependence on the abuser often traps the victim in the relationship. Statistics also show that family violence frequently escalates when the victim attempts to break free. Consequently, combating economic and safety hurdles is crucial to helping victims exit the cycle of violence.

State child support agencies and state courts continue to work together to develop and implement criteria . . . for a Family Violence Indicator.

In the child support provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA, or welfare reform), Congress sought to address these obstacles. These new mandates, particularly those involving safety, carve out an important role for courts in the release of confidential data.

The Family Violence Indicator

One of PRWORA's chief accomplishments was to strengthen the locate tools available to state and federal officials for child support purposes. The creation of a Federal Case Registry of Child Support Orders (FCR) and State Case Registries (SCRs) are just two of the enhancements to the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) that were designed to improve child support establishment and enforcement nationally. These locate tools include personal and case data for matters being handled by state child support agencies (IV-D cases) and also personal and order information about private child support matters handled by state courts (non-IV-D orders).

Congress took steps to ensure that better locate mechanisms do not inadvertently increase the risk of harm to family violence victims. Thus, PRWORA also included provisions to bolster data safeguards.

Among the new safeguards is a *Family Violence Indicator* ("FV Indicator" or "FVI") — a required data element in the FCR as well as each SCR. [42 U.S.C. §§653(b)(2) and 654(26)(D); 45 CFR §307.11(f)(1)(x)]. A state is responsible for setting the FV Indicator in the SCR record of a person involved in either a IV-D or a non-IV-D matter. This occurs whenever the state has reasonable evidence of domestic violence or child abuse and an indication that the disclosure of data could place the person at risk of physical or emotional harm. State IV-D agencies and state courts continue to work together to develop and implement criteria to identify the need for an FV Indicator.

The FV Indicator, which also is transmitted to the FCR, notifies both state and federal child support officials about a person's family violence concerns. While the impact of the FV Indicator varies by state, the outcome is clear at the federal level. An FV Indicator acts to shut off the release of data for the protected person, not just from the FCR — which maintains the FV Indicator — but from the entire FPLS.

The FV Indicator Override

Only authorized people or entities are permitted to request FPLS data. [42 U.S.C. §§653(c) and 663(d)(2)]. When an authorized person requests data about a person protected by an FV Indicator, the requester will be notified that disclosure is prohibited. However, PRWORA does allow a protected person's data to be released in one specific instance. The process to obtain data for a protected person is known as the *FV Indicator Override* (see Box, next page).

An authorized requester may petition an appropriate court, as defined in 42 U.S.C. §§653(c)(2) and 663(d)(2)(B), to permit the beginning of the override process. If the court grants the petition, it forwards the authorizing documents to the State Parent Locator Service (SPLS) in that state. If the request complies with federal law, the SPLS must deliver it to OCSE.

A Family Violence Indicator acts to shut off the release of data for the protected person.

OCSE also reviews the legality of the request and will perform the override when appropriate. That is, OCSE will disengage the person's FV Indicator just long enough to extract the data allowed by law. Then, the FV Indicator is reset, and OCSE forwards the data to the request-

Continued on page 7, "FV Indicator"

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FV Indicator

Continued from page 6.

ing state's parent locator service. The SPLS must immediately forward the unopened data package to the authorizing court.

Federal law requires that court to make a "determination" whether release of the information to the requester could be harmful to the subject party or child. If the court finds that harm is possible to the subject, then the request for the release of the data must be denied.

When there is an override, OCSE also contacts each state that sent an FV Indicator for the person. This provides notice to that "placing" state about the override and the state that received it. It also allows the placing state to share with the requesting state information about the rationale for the FV Indicator and/or to contact the subject so that he or she can participate in the decision-making about data release conducted by the court in the requesting state.

For more information regarding efforts by OCSE and the courts to safeguard family violence victims, contact Susan Notar at (202) 401-4606 or snotar@acf.dhhs.gov. For more information regarding the FV Indicator, contact Jane Mickens at (301) 447-9455. ☐

Jane Mickens is FVR Family Violence Coordinator.

Issues for Courts and CSE Agencies Considering FV Indicator Override

- The petition or motion procedures for the initial override request;
- *The type of authorizing documents to be issued by the court (e.g., order, letter, form, etc.);*
- A process and point of contact for forwarding override authorization documents to the state child support agency;
- *A procedure and timeframe for providing notice of the determination hearing to interested persons (e.g., the requester, the placing state child support agency, the protected person);*
- A hearing process;
- *Relevant instructions for the person receiving the data following its release (e.g., use only by that person, use only for the authorized purpose, information safeguard requirements);*
- A method for disposing of data in the court's possession after release or after denial of the request; and
- *The need to contact the court that originally placed a protective order, if different from the court hearing the override request.* ☐

President Proclaims Parents' Day

The President proclaimed Sunday, July 25, 1999, as Parents' Day, inviting states, communities, and the people of the United States to join together in honoring our Nation's parents. The Proclamation read, in part, as follows:

"On Parents' Day, we pay tribute to the millions of parents whose care has nurtured us, whose vigilance has protected us, and whose selfless devotion has blessed our lives.

The challenges of parenthood have changed as our society has changed. In many American families, both parents work outside the home and struggle to balance the competing demands of job, home, and family. In others, a single parent bears these responsibilities. Yet, parents remain *the foundation of the family and a cornerstone of community life in America.* They instill the values, attitudes, and guidance children need to become strong individuals and caring citizens.

Parents remain
the foundation of the family
and a cornerstone of
community life in America.

As we prepare to enter the 21st century, let us remember that, just as parents remain a treasured link to our past, they also influence the future by raising their children to become the responsible citizens of tomorrow. On this day and throughout the year, let us honor the millions of devoted mothers and fathers who have fulfilled this solemn responsibility with extraordinary compassion, generosity, and love." ☐

William J. Clinton

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Child Support Report

Let Us Know What You're Thinking

Surely this is one of the most exciting times to be working in child support enforcement since the beginning of the program. OCSE's monthly newsletter, *Child Support Report (CSR)*, serves to promote the interchange of news and ideas among federal, state, and local child support enforcement personnel.

The very first issue of *CSR*, dated January, 1978, carries a statement that remains true today: "The purpose of *Child Support Report* can only be met through your active involvement. I urge you to submit news from your state on any aspect of the child support program, as well as ideas for future articles."

Your opinion matters to us. Any comments, concerns, or compliments you can share with us will help us do a better job for you. Tell us how we can improve *CSR* to make it a more useful publication to your needs. Take a minute to send a note to Phil Sharman, Editor, *Child Support Report*, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20447. Or call him at (202) 401-4626. ☐

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet
PSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 9, September 1999

Rhode Island's EFT/EDI Service: Fast, Flexible, Efficient, and A Hit with Employers

By Jack Murphy

Jack Murphy

Rhode Island, like many other states, has been working to comply with new requirements to speed up the delivery of child support payments. Welfare reform has led states to establish a central site (State Disbursement Unit, or SDU) for the collection and distribution of child support payments. Each SDU must distribute child support payments within two days of receipt. Further, federal certification criteria for automated child support systems require states to be able to receive child support payments electronically.

Most of us are familiar with electronic banking through the use of credit and debit cards, withdrawals from automatic teller machines (ATMs), or having our paychecks automatically deposited in our bank accounts, a process known as "direct deposit."

Electronic funds transfer/electronic data interchange (EFT/EDI) is a term used to describe the simultaneous, electronic transmission of payments and payment related information.

The Child Support Application Banking Convention is a standard format developed for the transmission of child support collections by means of Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) Credit payments. ACH Credit payments, which originate with the employer's bank, electronically transfer child support payments and payment information to state child support agencies through the ACH Network. An employer contracts with the bank to set up ACH Credit processing, paying an initial fee, as well as a fee for each transaction.

While we are implementing ACH Credit processing for Rhode Island's larger employers, we also need a system that would be easy for small or medium-sized employers to use. The ACH Credit payment procedure is more attractive to large corporations that have the computer equipment and resources needed to process large sums of money electronically. Typically, smaller employers do not have the resources to avail themselves of it.

Travelers Auto Body, for example, is a small Rhode Island company with 11 employees, two of whom have child support obligations. Susan McConnell, Travelers' Office Manager, has indicated that it would not make good financial sense for them to set up ACH Credit processing with their own bank just to deduct two child support payments per pay period.

For firms such as Travelers Auto Body, a process called "ACH Debit" provides a way to send child support payments electronically. ACH Debit differs from ACH Credit

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ex terms of who initiates the deduction.

With the *ACH Debit*, the State of Rhode Island, through its private vendor, First Data Corp. – Cash Tax Inc. (CTI), provides access to the *ACH Network*. CTI initiates the deduction (of child support payments) from the employer's bank account and sends it to the bank used by the Rhode Island child support office. Disbursement is then made to the custodial parent.

Thanks to this public/private partnership between Rhode Island's Child Support Enforcement office and CTI, a company that specializes in the electronic transfer of private employer tax payments to state treasuries, sending payments from income withholdings is quick and easy for employers.

Here's how it works. An employer who is under an income withholding order in Rhode Island phones the *ACH Debit* service provider, CTI, and gives the child support income withholding information over the phone to operators who follow a script customized by the Rhode Island CSE office. The average call takes less than two minutes, and the service is free to the employer community.

RI employers can now move payments for employee personal income tax withholdings, sales taxes, and income withholdings for child support to the State through the same company.

At the end of the day, the CSE office receives a file transfer of the EFT transactions and posts these transactions electronically to its CSE master file. The money is already in the child support bank account because CTI has moved it there electronically. More than 700 of the approximately 6,000 employers in Rhode Island who withhold child support payments from their employees' paychecks now send their income withholding payments using the *ACH Debit* process.

Since the CSE office is part of Rhode Island's Division of Taxation, the agency was able to piggyback on a contract originally awarded by the Division of Taxation to CTI for the collection of employee and employer taxes. Employers in Rhode Island can now move payments for employee personal income tax withholdings, sales taxes, and income withholdings for child support to the State through the same company.

It seems likely that many states may already have established contracts for *ACH Debit* services to handle employer tax payments electronically. Child support directors may be able to tap into such electronic funds services by an amendment to the contract, thus avoiding the need for a separate, lengthy, and expensive RFP process.

Each week the Rhode Island CSE automated system sends CTI information on newly recorded employers who are under income withholding orders. For a fee of $.82 per employer, CTI contacts these employers by first class mail and introduces them to the Rhode Island electronic funds transfer system. Once an employer signs up for the service, the average employer's transaction cost (telephone call to report income withholdings for EFT for several obligors) paid by the state is less than $1.25. Rhode Island's electronic funds transfer costs are eligible for federal reimbursement at the 66 percent match rate.

Faster disbursement of child support payments means better service to our customers and fewer calls to employers.

Electronic banking has proved to be faster and more efficient than mailing paper checks and preparing lists of remittance information. It saves employers postage and administrative processing costs, while reducing errors. The savings to state child support agencies also can be significant. Rhode Island's CSE Collection and Disbursement Unit (the SDU) has been able to transfer the EFT/EDI data entry work to a third party at a fraction of what it would cost to set up electronic banking in house.

The process also has enabled Rhode Island to reach its goal of entering payments in a timely and efficient manner. And faster disbursement of child support payments means better service to our customers and fewer calls to employers or to the child support office from worried custodial parents.

For more information, contact Jack Murphy at (401) 222-2966, or e-mail murphyj@gw.state.ri.us

Jack Murphy is Rhode Island's Child Support Director.

OCSE and Small Business Administration Sign Co-Sponsorship Agreement

Seated at table, David Gray Ross and Betsy Myers. Standing L to r., Nancy Bonnor, Amy Beal, Donna Bonar and Carol Callahan, OCSE; Lydia Bickford and Dana Colarulli, SBA.

OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross signed a co-sponsorship agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) on June 29, 1999. The agreement provides OCSE with the means to expand its legislatively mandated outreach effort to SBA's audience of approximately six million small business employers.

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According to Betsy Meyers, SBA's Director of Entrepreneurial Development, "This is a wonderful effort which will help small business employers and owners to comply with the law while simultaneously helping children and society."

The co-sponsorship also enables SBA to disseminate critical and relevant child support information through their many district offices. The success of this endeavor will help employers understand their responsibilities, provide information necessary to perform their duties, and could result in the collection of millions more child support dollars for our nation's children.

"This agreement," Commissioner Ross says, "is one more example of OCSE's determination to reach out to all partners and involve them in our efforts to help children and families."

The co-sponsorship agreement will last through June, 2000, and will include several activities to promote employers' understanding of their child support responsibilities. In addition to information dissemination, the two federal agencies will collaborate to produce materials to train SBA staff on the child support system.

Also, OCSE has designed, for use on SBA's new On-Line Classroom, a training course for small business employers on their child support responsibilities. This computer-based training received over 1.2 million hits in the first two weeks of its operation.

For more information on the OCSE-SBA co-sponsorship agreement, contact Amy Beal at abeal@acf.dhhs.gov ☐

Bringing the IRG Into the 21st Century

In keeping with Commissioner David Gray Ross' designation of interstate enforcement as OCSE's number one priority for 1999, the agency is developing an online version of the Interstate Roster and Referral Guide (IRG). A tool that provides caseworkers with the information necessary to process interstate cases—which make up about a third of the total child support caseload—the IRG consists of two sections: the State-At-A-Glance Profiles, and the Directory of Addresses.

The State-at-a-Glance section outlines each state's CSE program, including program operation, the number of local offices, age of majority, statutes of limitations, guidelines, review and adjustments, and paternity establishment.

The Directory of Addresses contains the addresses of each state's central registry, parent locator service, tax offset coordinator, child support director, payment processing site, and local child support agencies, as well as the FIPS codes for the state.

To help make the IRG as effective and easy-to-use as possible, OCSE is currently piloting an online, updateable version with several states. Although the pilot contains only the State-At-A-Glance section, feedback thus far has been positive. OCSE plans to expand the pilot to include the Directory of Addresses section and to enhance the State-At-A-Glance section based on feedback received from states at a requirements session held earlier this year.

The online IRG, including both sections and online update capability, is expected to be available to all states in late fall 1999. Since not all front line workers have access to the Internet, a transition plan will be put into place for those states that are delayed in gaining online access to the IRG. In addition, technical assistance will be provided to help states effectively use the online system.

To keep the IRG as current as possible, OCSE will take a proactive approach to ensure that states update their IRG information. OCSE will follow up with states that have not updated their Directory of Addresses during the last quarter and/or their State-At-A-Glance profile during the last six months, and provide any assistance necessary to help them keep their information current.

While it will remain a state responsibility to update the IRG on a regular basis, the online IRG will make it much easier for states to maintain and access up-to-date information essential to the effective processing of interstate cases. Questions regarding the IRG should be directed to Ella Lawson at (202) 401-4963 or via e-mail at elawson@acf.dhhs.gov. □

Making A Difference In Children's Lives

The Illinois Department of Public Aid has prepared a brochure in English and Spanish with information on how to get help from the Child Support Enforcement, Head Start, and Child Care programs in the State. The Spanish language version is shown below. For information, contact Lois Rakov at the Illinois child support program at (312) 793-4790. □

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A State Perspective on the Benefits of the Multi-State Match: Maryland

In August, 1999, states began receiving information from the initial matches between multi-state financial institutions and OCSE. This information is the result of matching files from the federal tax offset tape with accounts from multi-state financial institutions. The purpose of the match data is to freeze and seize funds from financial accounts of delinquent obligors, but there are other benefits as well. For example, the information helps establish equitable child support orders and serves as a resource for enforcement activities.

The purpose of the match data is to freeze and seize funds from financial accounts of delinquent obligors.

John Clark, of OCSE's Philadelphia Regional Office, recently asked Karen Mayer, Assistant Director for the Bureau of Support Enforcement in Harford County, Maryland, and Brian Shea, the (then) Acting Executive Director of the Maryland Child Support Program and the Director of the Montgomery County Office of Child Support Enforcement, about the uses of multi-state match financial information.

CSR: *Karen, how does multi-state financial information help your office in locating obligors?*

Karen: When we receive the bank account information, we immediately issue an administrative subpoena to obtain a copy of the application the noncustodial parent completed to open the account. If the bank cannot provide a copy of the application, we request a blank application and then request specific information used to open the account.

Most applications request information on residence, employer, date of birth, Social Security number, and other information that can be used to establish contacts. If the noncustodial parent no longer resides at the listed address, other leads may be obtained from talking with former neighbors and employers—both of whom can be valuable resources for locate purposes.

CSR: *In a judicial State like Maryland, where there is a heavy emphasis on consent agreements, how does the multi-state financial information help a child support office in the establishment and modification of a child support order?*

Brian: The more information you have about an obligor's financial situation, the better you are able to negotiate a fair and equitable support amount. More complete financial information will be especially helpful in cases where the obligor is self-employed or where there is no income verification.

CSR: *How does the information help when taking enforcement action to secure a payment agreement with a delinquent obligor?*

Karen: Knowing the balance in the account and seeing how much is deposited in the account on a regular basis will make it easier for the agent to identify how much is available for a payment agreement. For the first time, the noncustodial parent will not be able to hide this valuable asset information. In addition, the current amount and a history of the account give leverage to the enforcement agent to persuade the noncustodial parent to pay. If not, he is given to understand that the information can be used in court to prove ability to pay.

CSR: *How about a contempt proceeding against a delinquent obligor? How does the information help there?*

Brian: In a contempt proceeding against an obligor, the agency can present evidence of an asset to assist the court in determining the proper amount of payment necessary to remove the contempt. In addition, proving that the defendant has assets will help the court determine if the obligor truly is in contempt.

CSR: *Would the fact that the financial account is joint, or being held in trust for someone, be considered in the establishment and enforcement process?*

Brian: The agency must determine to what degree the funds are available to the obligor, and many times this is a difficult task. We are working with representatives of financial institutions and attorneys to carefully examine this issue.

CSR: *Thank you.* □

John Clark is a Child Support Program Specialist in OCSE's Philadelphia Regional Office.

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Fatherhood . . .

Mississippi Responsible Fatherhood Initiative

By: Donald R. Taylor

Being a father can be one of the toughest jobs you'll ever face. And one of the most rewarding. To realize their potential, our children do not need 'parenting' so much as they need responsible mothering and fathering.

The Initiative has drawn the participation of concerned citizens from business, the clergy, elected officials, law enforcement, the media, and schools.

To raise public awareness that every child deserves a loving, committed, and responsible father, Mississippi began a statewide Responsible Fatherhood Initiative in 1998. Administered through our Department of Human Services, with assistance from the National Center for Fathering, activities have included:

- Recruiting and training 44 men to be "coach fathers;"
- Conducting 63 Responsible Fatherhood Initiative introductory sessions; and
- Introducing more than 1,100 program participants to methods in how to be nurturers, disciplinarians, mentors, moral instructors, skill coaches, and economic providers for their children.

The Initiative has drawn the participation of concerned citizens from business, the clergy, elected officials, law enforcement, the media, and schools. Our objectives include reducing out-of-wedlock teenage births, juvenile crimes, school dropout rates, and child abuse/neglect. To achieve these, we plan to incorporate the training of inmates in Mississippi's correctional institutions and training of "expectant" fathers. Also, we will request judges to court-order fathers with delinquent or problem children to participate in the program.

If you would like more information, contact Mr. Nellie Norwood at (601) 359-4768. ☐

Donald R. Taylor is the Executive Director of Mississippi's Department of Human Services.

Early Head Start Program and Fathers

As a result of research findings, Early Head Start programs are taking specific steps to involve fathers. Many of the programs have designated a staff member whose responsibility is to promote father involvement. Other methods—developing men's support groups, using language in program materials that addresses both parents, training male staff and [illegible] of activities to be given consistent for working fathers, including fathers in [illegible] and [illegible] the program model focus not focused on the mother-child relationship as one that is family-focused.

From focus groups with fathers at four sites, researchers report that many fathers are highly committed and very much want to be involved with their children. Interviewers were struck by the strength of the fathers' determination to "be there" for their children and to assume financial responsibility for them. ☐

With permission from the March 1998 Head Start Bulletin, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Judicial Administrators: Managing the Courts

By: Ray Ramnik

As a past president of NCSEA and an official of the judicial arm of child support in New Jersey, I have watched the growth of child support and its new responsibilities create a response in court systems to develop managers with skill and expertise in child support matters. These managers, called Child Support Judicial Administrators, are charged with implementing new programs and developing additional funding and technology for the courts, in addition to managing staff resources and maintaining good working relationships with their state child support agencies.

The growth of child support and its new responsibilities [created] a response in court systems to develop managers with skill and expertise in child support matters.

Their duties encompass cases of all types, though in many jurisdictions child support is one of the largest sections of the total caseload—whether the venue is district court, domestic relations court, or the family division of superior court—and as such must be accorded priority. Effective child support Judicial Administrators build communication links with their state child support agencies and solicit agency staff expertise to help improve case processing and resolve families' financial and social obligations during and after divorce.

Training is an important responsibility of Child Support Judicial Administrators. Over the past dozen years, the CSE program has gone through major rewrites of federal and state legislation. These changes and accompanying new regulations have created an increased demand for updated comprehensive training programs.

The implementation of UIFSA alone made necessary the training of all judicial staff in the new law and interstate procedures. Working with OCSE, the National Center for State Courts, and NCSEA, Judicial Administrators have endeavored to answer this need with regional and national conferences, workshops, and seminars.

The need for court involvement in the Federal Case Registry is recognition of the reality of American mobility. In today's society, individuals move from state to state at a rate of 20 percent per year.

For courts, many federal requirements have brought change that the courts should implement in the name of good management.

This can mean difficulties for judges, administrators, and litigants in gathering all the information necessary for good judicial decision making in child support matters. This, in turn, requires Judicial Administrators to further streamline court operations and seek out new technologies that will help the courts resolve matters more quickly than in the past.

Expedited process time standards, mandated by the Federal Child Support Enforcement Program, represent goals that the Judicial Administrator must meet to ensure that the court system maintains proper case management. These and other requirements are balanced, however, by the potential for courts, through federal reimbursement policies, to gain new funding sources— evidence that, for courts, many federal requirements have brought change that the courts should implement in the name of good management. Judicial Administrators are helping to make this a reality as they work to build inter-agency programs while maintaining judicial independence and integrity.□

Ray Ramnik is Chief of Child Support Enforcement Services in New Jersey's Administrative Office of the Courts.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Office of Child Support Enforcement
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Child Support Report

Meeting Basic Needs: The Importance of Regular Child Support

Income derived from the steady receipt of child support payments helps families meet the necessities of living and give their children more stable, healthier lives. Consider: In 1995, more than a quarter of children (28.5 percent of those under age 10, 27 percent of those ages 10 to 17) lived in a household in which someone reported at least one difficulty meeting basic needs.

According to the Census Bureau, "at least one difficulty meeting basic needs includes those who didn't meet essential expenses, didn't pay utility bills, didn't pay rent or mortgage, needed to see the dentist but didn't go, needed to see the doctor but didn't go, had phone service cut off, had utilities shut off, were evicted or didn't get enough to eat."

Overall, there were 18.1 million children who were in households with at least one difficulty meeting basic needs. More than one-third of all people living in households with at least one difficulty meeting basic needs were children.

Children whose basic needs are met are more likely to make a healthy transition from childhood to adulthood, and the steady receipt of child support helps meet those needs. ☐

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June 1999 Current Population Reports.

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Assistant Secretary
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Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Shannon

(202) 401-4626 Fax:(202) 401-5559 Internet: DSherman@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 10, October 1999

Iowa Judges and Child Support Staff Join Forces to Reduce Paper in Court Filings

By John Nabra, Michael Parker, and Patricia Hemphill

In mid-1998, a small group of Iowa judges and child support recovery unit staff (CSRU) started a project to reduce the amount of paper being filed with the clerks of the Iowa District Court. Specifically, the group focused on reducing the number of pages filed in each of Iowa's quasi-judicial administrative process cases.

In addition to reducing the number of pages of each form, the group also explored ways to make the forms more understandable to the public.

Background

The court and CSRU had previously discussed the need for statewide uniformity in limiting the volume of documents filed with the clerks of court. These discussions identified other mutual concerns, including condensing CSRU documents that are filed.

Iowa's quasi-judicial administrative establishment and modification processes require court ratification before an administrative order is finalized. In the past, CSRU filed with the court virtually all documents used in quasi-judicial processes, and the court periodically expressed concerns about the volume of paperwork being filed within these processes and the need to explore ways to reduce the volume.

Review of Forms

The Iowa Supreme Court appointed two chief district court judges (trial court judges) to work with CSRU to explore methods to reduce the number of pages filed with the clerks of court through revision of the administrative forms. Another district court judge also provided valuable input into the forms revision process. The child support recovery unit assigned several staff members to the project, including three attorneys, a field worker, and a policy specialist. The participation of these individuals, from various parts of Iowa, also served another goal of the project, which was to develop procedures and forms that could be used uniformly across the state.

An essential element of the forms revision success was the inclusion of "hands on" individuals. These included trial court judges who were so familiar with the quasi-judicial process and CSRU forms that they were able to refer to each form by its state-assigned number. The work group also included a CSRU worker who used the forms every day and field attorneys who were very familiar with CSRU forms, statutes, and the court. Child support staff were able to share with the judges the frequency of specific fact patterns. Then, the group could decide whether a form's language should be drafted to

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Iowa

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address rare situations.

Iowa's quasi-judicial establishment process (known in Iowa as the CSRU's administrative process) was legislatively created in 1984. Since then, CSRU had not made significant revisions to an entire set of forms. Instead, CSRU had edited existing forms to reflect legislative or process changes. Also, CSRU had added language to satisfy groups concerned that individuals who represent themselves could not understand the forms. The administrative process forms, in existence when this project began, were created and altered over the years based upon these factors.

Before CSRU could agree to delete or revise words from the forms, staff traced the history of each statement to determine whether there existed a statutory, regulatory, or other legal requirement that a particular statement be present. The group found that much of the language in the forms is statutorily required. These statutory requirements limited the revisions. However, the group decided that where appropriate, and in order to achieve the goals of the project to streamline the forms, footnoting could be used to provide some of the required statutory notices.

> *It's really more than ever that the solutions to our shared concerns are interconnected*

Computer advancements allowed flexibility in formatting. This technological advancement also helped facilitate accomplishing the goals of the project. For example, increased programming flexibility allowed for deletion of "check the box" paragraphs, where nonpertinent statements are present in the form. Now, only the chosen language is displayed in the form. While more programming is costly, it greatly reduced the number of pages of each form and created a more readable end product.

Results

The new, more user-friendly, forms will dramatically reduce the volume of paper the clerks of court must handle. The documents will require less storage space, both in courthouses and CSRU offices, as clerks of court will have to maintain and store approximately 85,000 fewer pages per year. Further, the number of pages clerks' offices must mail to parties could be reduced by up to a quarter million each year, based on the rule of thumb that for every document retained in a clerk's office, two or three times that number will be filed, stamped, and distributed to the parties and CSRU.

The court and CSRU face many of the same challenges. The work group results have encouraged the courts and CSRU to jointly approach other shared concerns. We realize more than ever that the solutions to our shared concerns are interconnected. □

John Noethe is Chief Judge of Iowa's 7th Judicial District. Michael Parker and Patricia Hemphill are Iowa Assistant Attorneys General

1999 Conference Calendar

The Calendar is printed quarterly in CSR in January, April, July, and October. If you are planning a meeting or conference and would like it to be included in the Calendar, please call OCSE's Bertha Hammett at (202) 401-5292 or fax her at (202) 401-5559. The Calendar is accessible through the Federal OCSE web site under the "News" section: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/newhtm.

Select Calendar of Events.

October

3-6 *Western Interstate CSE Council (WICSEC) Annual Training Conference*, Holiday Inn University Plaza, Springfield, MO; Jane Williams (573) 751-7079.

6-8 *North Dakota Family Support Council 10th Annual Conference*, Travel Lodge Convention Center, Dickinson, ND; Colin Bertrand (701) 662-1374 or Linda Markowski (701) 328-3582.

12-15 *California Family Support Council Quarterly Meeting*, Hyatt Regency Alicante, Anaheim, CA. Yvonne St. Jean (209) 582-3251 X 2403.

13-15 *Michigan Family Support Council Annual Training Conference*, Boyne Highlands Resort, Harbor Springs, MI; Mark Ambler (517) 839-1103.

November

2-5 *Missouri CSE Association*, Holiday Inn Westport, St. Louis, MO; Debra Jones (816) 881-3446. □

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The CSE Program: Securing the Future

Truly, we are living in the "information age." From obtaining instant credit to making travel plans on the Internet, the benefits of technology have touched us all. The same technology advancements that have changed our personal lives also have changed our jobs. Technology offers child support enforcement an exciting new set of tools to locate noncustodial parents and to secure support.

Misuse of data, either accidental or intentional, has serious ramifications for the public, caseworkers, and the program.

These new tools also bring added responsibility to protect privacy and security. Being aware of technology's impact on you, your customers, and the child support program will help to ensure that these technical breakthroughs will continue to support America's children and families.

In carrying out the requirements of the welfare reform legislation, OCSE and state child support agencies have developed massive databases to provide child support workers with rapid and accurate information on participants in child support cases. The National Directory of New Hires, for example, contains employment data on nearly every working American—whether or not they are participants in child support cases. It is imperative that we protect this data. Misuse, either accidental or intentional, has serious ramifications for the public, caseworkers, and the program.

Unguarded data falling into the wrong hands could result in persons in our databases becoming the victims of identity theft and having their credit ruined. Accidentally releasing a piece of locate information to the wrong person could result in a domestic violence episode. Child support professionals are required to adhere to strict federal and state disclosure laws. Workers who break these laws may be subject to fines, imprisonment, termination, and civil penalties.

Security today is still about keeping our workers safe and securing government property. But it is also about protecting the privacy of people in our databases. Congress has given the child support enforcement program access to an unprecedented pool of data, and with that access comes close and constant scrutiny. We should not take our privileged access for granted. If we do not adequately protect our resources, we could lose our access to the data. As a caseworker, when handling data from one of our databases, always keep in mind how you would want your own data to be handled.

OCSE offers the following suggestions to managers of child support offices to ensure data privacy and security.

- Make security a management priority. Set the tone for your office. Include security and privacy needs in your budget.
- Prepare a comprehensive security plan that provides for the security and privacy of the data, the safety of the workers, and the safety and security of the office and office equipment.
- Prepare plans to respond to such incidents as unauthorized access to data, bomb threats, fires, and threats to workers and customers.
- Work with local law enforcement to provide proper security for buildings and equipment.
- Train workers and provide clear guidelines on the handling of data and the use of privileged information. This training should be provided on a regular, ongoing basis.
- Each year, require that workers review and sign nondisclosure statements.
- Designate a security officer to be responsible for monitoring compliance with your plans.
- Integrate security issues into the day-to-day operations of the agency through articles in newsletters, brown bag lunches, agenda items in staff meetings, and the use of posters and employee incentive awards.

OCSE has produced a one-day security course for caseworkers entitled, "The Child Support Enforcement Program—Securing Our Future," which focuses on protecting data, preventing identity theft, and physically protecting caseworkers. In addition, we have developed a three-hour security class designed specifically for managers. These can be delivered directly to your staff or we can train your trainers.

To request training, speakers for a conference, or other materials, contact Danny Markley at (202) 401-5440 or dmarkley@acf.dhhs.gov. □

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Connecting Fathers, Families, and Communities in Washington State

By Bob Hoffman

Washington State's Division of Child Support (DCS) recently hosted a very successful conference entitled, "Connecting Fathers, Families and Communities: Dads Make a Difference" at Green River Community College in Auburn.

The result of a request from Governor Gary Locke, the conference was the first event of its kind in Washington State. To make certain that all voices were heard, input was gathered from many different perspectives. A steering committee included staff from throughout the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), of which DCS is a part, as well as other state and federal agencies. Members came from the DSHS Economic Services Administration, the DSHS Medical Assistance Administration, the ESA State Tribal Relations Unit, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, the State Department of Health, fathers' advocacy groups, and others.

The committee worked diligently to ensure that appropriate information was taken into consideration and all stakeholders had sufficient input. They reviewed relevant research, held focus groups with fathers, reviewed other states' fatherhood initiatives, and surveyed community and faith-based organizations.

[illegible]

The information painted a distressing picture. Forty percent of children today live in homes without the biological father present. The absence of fathers, whether physical or psychological, has profound consequences for children. Children who grow up without their fathers are substantially more likely to have troubles in school, with law enforcement, drugs and alcohol, and interpersonal relationships. These children frequently carry the effects of their unmet needs into adult life and begin the cycle again with their own children.

By improving services to fathers, we believe we can help break this cycle. When we help a father, we also help his children. And when a man has the services and resources he needs, he can be a much more effective father. As a result, the children of our State will be more likely to grow into healthy adults who will, in turn, be able to help their own children. This embodies the mission of the Department of Social and Health Services.

The conference became a vehicle to link and empower direct service providers, staff from government agencies, community and faith-based organizations, and fathers themselves. Participants shared their experiences and their expertise. Thirty-two workshops gave representatives from throughout the State and nation an opportunity to discuss the services fathers need and the programs serving them. The more than 300 participants gained an opportunity to build new relationships and acquire substantial knowledge.

On the last day of the three-day conference, participants met in facilitated roundtable discussions to refine their ideas and plan strategies for implementation upon return to their communities. A closing ceremony featuring young Native American dancers and drummers capped the event. If you would like more information about the conference, contact Bob Hoffman at (360)664-5447. □

Bob Hoffman works in the Community Relations Unit of Washington State's Division of Child Support.

Kentucky Child Support and Cincinnati Bengals Join to Support Fatherhood

Minnesota Project To Help Low-Income Fathers

By Lois Wilder Larson

State, county, city, and private sector partners are preparing to launch a three-year pilot project in Minneapolis to help 500 young, low-income, nonresidential fathers step up to the challenge of providing for and caring for their children. Called FATHER (Fostering Actions To Help Earnings and Responsibility), the project will provide dads with job counseling, enhanced child support enforcement, peer support and parenting education, and connections to other services such as mediation, and chemical dependency and anger management counseling.

Two Hennepin County child support officers will assist fathers by establishing child support agreements that they can honor while moving toward a livable and potentially increasing income. "It all has to do with child support orders that accurately reflect the fathers' circumstances," says Lynne Kanes, program manager of Hennepin County's Collection Services Division.

> "I expect the FATHER Project to be successful in improving the willingness and the ability of fathers to support their children emotionally and financially."
>
> — Laura Kaboll

Research indicates that many young low income noncustodial fathers feel disconnected from their children and are anxious to reestablish relations with them. "We know there is large potential in some of the numbers of fathers who can be helped with an approach like this," says Laura Kaboll, director of Minnesota's Department of Human Services' Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED). "We expect the FATHER Project to be successful in improving the willingness and the ability of fathers to support their children emotionally and financially."

Project staff will recruit participants for the voluntary program through workers associated with Minneapolis Way to Grow, a nonprofit community based organization providing school readiness programs to families. Other partners are the Minneapolis Neighborhood Employment Network, Minneapolis Employment and Training Program, Hennepin County's Collection Services Division, and CSED.

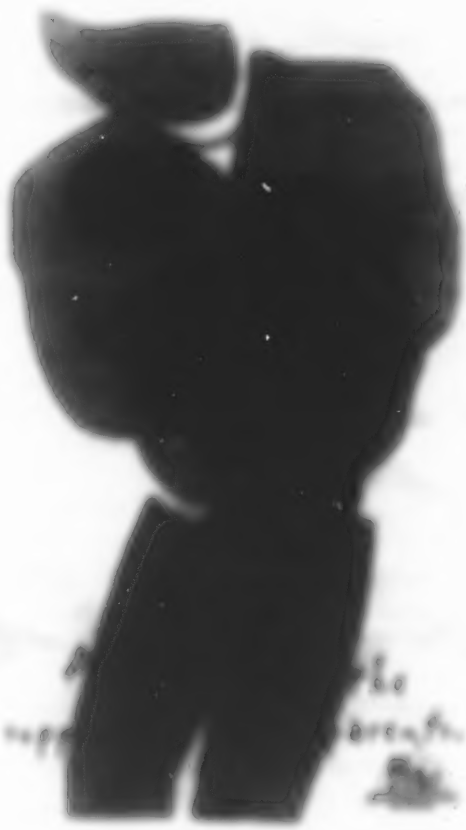
If you would like more information about the project, contact Laurie Davis Van Wert at (651) 296-0981. ☐

Lois Wilder Larson is a Minnesota based freelance writer.

This article appeared in slightly different form in the Winter, 1999, Child Support Quarterly, a publication of the Minnesota Child Support Enforcement Division. Molly Crawford, editor. Used with permission.

Poster

"This poster to promote the role of fathers in supporting their children was developed through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and graphic arts students at Staples and Minneapolis technical colleges. Posters, sized 11 X 17 inches, are available by calling Diane F. Smith at (651) 282-9939. ☐



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Grants Awarded to Study Arrearage Collections

By Tom Killeen

OSE Commissioner David Gray Ross is pleased to announce that his agency has awarded three new Section 1115 demonstration grants totaling over $240,000. The grants were awarded to Colorado, Virginia, and Washington State. Funded under program announcement OCI 96-02, these grants are demonstration projects that will look at arrearage collections. The funds are matched by state and federal matching funds and a state contribution, which significantly increases the total budget for each project.

Uncollected past-due child support has been a challenge for the child support program for many years. On awarding these grants, Commissioner Ross said that he looks forward to supporting projects "that examine the long-term dimension of uncollected child support so that practices that contribute to the problem can be identified and the most effective collection mechanisms can be employed." The levels of funding and the objectives of each project follow.

The Colorado Dept. of Human Services will document the characteristics of arrearage cases, the level and pace of their accumulation and growth, the impact of State policies and collection tools, the role of child support workers, and the impact of arrearages on families. Funding: $75,000.

The Virginia Dept. of Social Services will analyze case-specific cases, identify the most effective collection tools, test the effects of those tools, project their impact, and determine the utility of the study results for other states. Funding: $90,000.

The Washington State Dept. of Social and Health Services will perform an analysis that seeks to predict debt outcomes and determine collectibility. Practices that may improve collectibility on arrearages will also be identified, as well as policies that may affect arrearage accumulation. Funding: $75,000.

For further information on Section 1115 grant projects, contact Tom Killeen at (202) 401-4877 or tkilleen@acf.dhhs.gov ☐

Tom Killeen is a Program Analyst in OCI's Division of Policy and Training.

Employer's Desk Guide to Child Support

Written in plain English, *The Employer's Desk Guide to Child Support* is intended for the business community, especially payroll and human resource personnel, but it will also serve program professionals and attorneys who want to review the child support responsibilities and practices of the employer community. Its 175 pages provide comprehensive information about the child support program and employer compliance with child support laws.

The format—spiral bound with 8 ½ inch pages—makes it handy to use. Topics range from new hire reporting and withholding income for child and medical support to disbursement of payments and what to do when an employee no longer works for you. Recent legislative and program changes that affect the role of employers are discussed in detail. Distinctions between employer and employee responsibilities are clearly set forth. Practical examples are provided throughout. A glossary of terms, mandatory forms, telephone numbers, website addresses, and state agency contacts is included, and at the end of each chapter, a Q & A section covers commonly asked questions.

To obtain your copy, contact the Government Printing Office (GPO) at (202) 512-1800, visit their website at http://orders.access.gpo.gov/_docs/sale.pdf/sale.pdf, or fax your order to (202) 512-2250. The Guide's stock number is 017-001-00550-0. The price of $23.00 includes shipping and handling. There is a 25 percent discount for orders of 100 or more. If you would like further information, contact Sarasingh Kasey by e-mail at skasey@acf.dhhs.gov ☐

OCSE Launches New Network: CSENet2000

Named at CSENet 2000 project site in Manassas, Virginia (from l. to r., Patricia Campbell, OCSE Commissioner David Gray-Ray, Gail Jackson, Rudi, J. to r., Sue Berry, Donna Bruce, Sophie Stoltzfus

Interstate child support cases present unique and difficult challenges for the state child support offices. Establishment and enforcement of interstate cases require coordination and cooperation from multiple agencies sometimes thousands of miles apart. Clearly, states need a way to communicate from one child support system to another, so that each system, despite differences in architecture and language, can use the information. The Child Support Enforcement Network (CSENet) was developed during the early 1990's to facilitate this system-to-system communication.

Forty-four states now have the capability to transfer CSENet 2000 files.

While CSENet made great strides in modernizing connections, a number of areas remained to be improved. In mid-September 1999, OCSE converted to CSENet's successor—CSENet 2000. The new network uses upgraded telecommunication lines, state-of-the-art routers instead of workstations, simplified interfaces, and a single file transfer format to transfer child support information between state child support agencies.

By mid-September, fifty-one states had new circuits and equipment installed and tested. In most states the new circuits and equipment are located in the CSE computer centers. Forty-four states now have the capability to transfer CSENet 2000 files.

With the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) and the Federal Case Registry (FCR), states have access to current information on the location of parents who owe child support. Now, with access to CSENet 2000, states can program their systems to automatically request additional information from another state or take an action based on matches from the NDNH or the FCR.

Programming state systems to handle routine requests in an automated fashion reserves line worker time for more complex cases. Information is available to the state system and thus to workers in a timely way (e.g., no waiting for telephone calls or letters), which means that children and families are provided with better service.

If you would like more information about CSENet 2000, contact Ken Carlton with the project staff at (703) 267-2971.

Thank You For Your Help in Naming CSENet 2000

We heard from 36 individuals with suggestions for renaming CSENet. A number of them made several suggestions. After careful consideration of all the proposed names, we followed the advice of Cindy Kennedy (Commissioner), Clark Wong (Louisiana), Jean Traynor (Montana), and Michael Hoer (OCSE Central Office).

They each suggested keeping "CSENet" as part of the name.

The new name, Child Support Enforcement Network 2000, describes both the network function and software that is new. Our thanks to each person who took the time to send suggestions.

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Child Support Report

"Night Court" Gives Options to Minnesota Parents

Convenient service is gaining more attention as child support offices nationwide. In Minnesota, a work group of Dakota County child support officers is overseeing a "night court" pilot project as an alternative for working parents to attend administrative process hearings.

In addition to regular daytime hearings, 5 p.m. hearings are held once a week at the county's West St. Paul office.

"It gives the public an opportunity to see government as more flexible and willing to accommodate their needs," says Judy Bennett, a child support officer and member of the extended hours work group.

To make the best use of the extended hours at the facility, the staff also arranged for Dakota County's job resource center to be open on the same evenings. ☐

This article appeared in slightly different form in the Spring, 1999, Child Support Quarterly, a publication of the Minnesota Child Support Enforcement Division. Mark Crawford, editor. Used with permission.

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Program Director
Eric Oddleifson

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Stratton

(202) 401-5410, Fax (202) 401-5559, Internet (PStratton@ACF.DHHS.gov)

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If you have enjoyed this issue of **Child Support Report**, *please pass it on to a co-worker or friend.*

Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Vol. XXI, No. 11, November 1999

State Legislators and CSE Directors Join Forces At National Symposium

State legislators, state child support administrators, and federal officials came together in Snowmass, Colorado, September 17 and 18 for two days of communication, collaboration, and mutual commitment to enhance child support services. The *National Legislators' Symposium on Child Support*, produced under contract to OCSE by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), aimed to strengthen the partnership among state legislators, state child support administrators, and OCSE.

"We must always remember that child support is a crucial program for helping children."

——OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross

The development of better collaboration and communication between legislators and child support program directors is essential to the shared goals of improving state child support programs and providing constituents with responsive service and accurate, reliable support payments.

Colorado Representative and Speaker Pro Tem Bill Kaufman welcomed the symposium participants, underscoring the importance of regular child support payments to children and families. "The marriage or the relationship may be over," he said, "but the obligation to pay support remains. My hope," he continued, "is that all of us will leave this symposium with new ideas and that we will return to our homes with a new commitment to child support."

"My hope is that all of us will leave this symposium with new ideas and . . . with a new commitment to child support."

——Colorado Representative Bill Kaufman

"I consider this symposium to be one of the most significant events of my tenure as head of the nation's child support enforcement program," OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross said in his keynote address. Emphasizing the need for partnership on behalf of children and families, the Commissioner outlined four essentials for success:

- Understanding one another;
- Being honest with one another;
- Supporting one another; and
- Making decisions collectively.

"We must always remember," he said, "that child support is a crucial program for helping children."

The symposium was organized around a series of informal plenary sessions and workgroups. Major issues taken up by the participants in plenaries included program goals and performance, financing issues, and automation.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Legislators

Continued from page 1

Workgroup sessions considered state disbursement, access and visitation, fathers' programs, tribal issues, low-income parents, and public/private partnerships.

A session on "Ask Your Federal Officials" gave state legislators and administrators an opportunity to ask representatives from OCSE about federal laws, regulations, and other matters that were not covered in other symposium sessions. □

NCSL's Child Support Project

Funded by OCSE, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) child support project assists state legislatures in their efforts to improve state child support programs. The project aims to assess child support legislation nationwide, promote the involvement of legislators in sustained child support reform, and assist them in understanding and acting on critical child support issues to improve programs and meet federal guidelines.

Project activities include tracking and analyzing state child support legislation; providing on-site and long-distance technical assistance to legislators and staff drafting or evaluating child support proposals; publishing issue briefs and reports relevant to important developments in child support; planning and organizing meetings about child support issues; and creating and maintaining a library of child support materials.

The project is staffed by Teresa Myers, director, Stephanie Walton, research analyst, and Mariquita Lucero, secretary.

The child support project is part of NCSL's Children and Families Program, directed by Jack Tweedie. Visit their website at: http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/cs.htm. □

Westchester County, NY, Celebrates Child Support

By: Theresa Weir

L. to r., Robert Doar, Constance Fox (who organized the event), Marion LaFranco, and Kevin Mahan

A recent community breakfast at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains, Westchester County, New York drew more than 100 guests to celebrate child support in the new millennium.

Guests at the event, sponsored by Westchester County's Department of Social Services, included Andy Spano, Westchester County Executive; Robert Doar, Director of New York's Office of Child Support Enforcement; and Kevin Mahan, Commissioner of Westchester County Social Services. A highlight was County Executive Spano's recognition of Marion LaFranco, Director of Westchester County's Office of Child Support Enforcement, with a Distinguished Service Award.

The breakfast showcased the services available through Westchester County's Child Support Enforcement Unit. "Westchester County has shown tremendous improvement in establishing paternity and support orders and in collections on current support," said Robert Doar, the New York State Director of Child Support. "A major reason," he continued, "is the importance Westchester County staff attach to working collaboratively with the State, the courts, and public assistance agencies." □

Theresa Weir is the Public Information Officer in New York State's Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

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More Grants Awarded to States

By Tom Killmurray

In September, OCSE awarded an additional $447,000 in research and demonstration grant funds under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act to Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Washington State. (See October '99 *CSR* for information on previous awards.) These grants are in response to state-generated ideas that further the goals of the child support program.

Colorado will explore ways to address the needs of incarcerated parents and ex-offenders using a Denver-based Work and Family Center that promotes family reintegration with legal education, supervised visitation, and mediation. **Funds: $80,000.**

Maryland, working with appropriate State academic institutions, proposes to establish a Child Support Worker Certification Program. **Funds: $127,000.**

Massachusetts seeks to enhance collaboration between CSE and public assistance agencies with an objective of improving customer cooperation with child support requirements. The project will improve workers' and parents' understanding of child support requirements, promote paternity establishment and child support orders, and explore the effectiveness of new staffing approaches. **Funds: $80,000.**

Virginia seeks to increase financial, as well as emotional support for children in Spotsylvania County by collaborating with courts, local social and mental health services, adult education, and detention centers. After the most common barriers to paying support are identified, community-based resources will be developed in an attempt to lower the incidence of nonpayment. **Funds: $80,000.**

Washington State will develop a centralized lien registry on a secure internet site that will enable other state agencies, local governments, and private companies to determine whether a claimant to funds that are about to be disbursed owes a child support debt. If a debt is owed, the State's Division of Child Support will be notified to take immediate collection action prior to the disbursement of funds to the obligor. **Funds: $80,000.**

In addition to these section 1115 grants (for which the grantee must be a state), OCSE also has recently awarded 13 Special Improvement Project grants (which are not limited to states but may be awarded to local agencies, tribal groups, nonprofit organizations, and the like, that meet the eligibility requirements).

These grants support innovative demonstrations and projects to:

- Improve interstate case processing by using automated systems to initiate income withholding in interstate cases and testing automated administrative enforcement in interstates cases using expanded data matches and interstate lien pilot programs to identify assets, real and personal property, and real estate;
- Enable tribal organizations to establish tribal child support programs;
- Test the child support assurance program directed toward unemployed noncustodial parents so that they can provide monthly support for their children;
- Train juvenile and family court judges in the child support provisions of welfare reform so as to effectively implement them; and
- Conduct studies and special initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of the nation's child support program, such as the development of a statewide customer satisfaction survey.

Commenting on the various grant awards, OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross said, "What we do in child support is geared towards helping children have better lives. We are committed to moving forward with the program. We want to learn new ways to help children so that no child is deprived of the basic essentials needed to grow up healthy and strong."

For more information on section 1115 grants, call Tom Killmurray at (202) 401-4677. For information on Special Improvement Project grants, call Susan Greenblatt at (202)401-4849. ☐

Tom Killmurray is a Program Analyst in OCSE's Division of Policy and Planning.

Iowa Forms Project Receives Award

Congratulations to Iowa's forms revision project (see October '99 *CSR*). The joint judicial/child support effort has been awarded the Common Grounds Leadership Award by Iowa's Public Institute for Public Leadership. ☐

Interstate . . .

Crossing the Line for Children and Families

Interstate Enforcement Takes Center Stage at OCSE's 9th National Training Conference

OCSE's 9th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference, held in Arlington, Virginia, September 14th and 15th, attracted 480 attendees representing 43 states and territories, as well as numerous Indian tribes. In welcoming remarks, OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross reminded participants that interstate enforcement remains an area where improvement is essential. Interstate cases make up nearly a third of the 19 million child support cases nationwide but account for only eight percent of collections.

Interstate cases make up nearly a third of the 19 million child support cases nationwide but account for only eight percent of collections.

"We need to do a better job of collecting interstate," the Commissioner said. "And we are determined to do that. This conference will help by giving us needed information and tools. Your dedication to children and families and your motivation to do the best job possible," he told participants, "are indispensable to our success."

The conference included a well-attended two-day training course on processing interstate/UIFSA child support cases.

The full conference agenda encompassed a variety of workshops, among them: medical support, interstate regulations, lessons from the Big 8 states (see box, page 5), incarcerated fathers and their children, criminal non-support, and tribal interstate issues. A Technology Center provided participants direct experience in working with computer-based training, the National Electronic CSE Resource System, and various Internet tools.

Senator Pam Brown of Nebraska spoke at the awards luncheon on the benefits to families of regular child support. "Regardless of obstacles, or any situations that may arise," she said, "we must continue to put the needs of children first."

OCSE Commissioner David Gray Ross addresses conference participants.

"Regardless of obstacles . . . we must continue to put the needs of children first."

—Nebraska Senator Pam Brown

Assistant Secretary Challenges the Program

ACF Assistant Secretary Olivia Golden delivered the keynote address, touching on the critical role of interstate support, the growing importance of child support as a source of stability for mothers leaving TANF and entering the workforce, and the priority of Y2K readiness to ensure that service to children and families is not interrupted.

Continued on page 5, "Crossing."

North Carolina's Christine Wall assists a conference participant in the Technology Center

Crossing

Continued from page 4

Adam reviewing the progress made over the past year, the Assistant Secretary cited five challenges to the program:

- To improve interstate collections;
- To get the most out of available tools;
- To continue to innovate;
- To keep focused on results; and
- To continue to work closely with our state partners.

Following the Assistant Secretary's address, a satellite video-teleconference plenary session linked the Dallas and Austin, Texas, offices to the conference, enabling an interactive discussion on distance learning.

If you would like more information about the conference, or other training matters, contact Michelle Helinke in OCSE's National Training Center at (202) 401-4536. □

The Big 8 States

California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Together, their caseloads and distributed collections make up nearly 50 percent of the national total. □

Interstate 2000 Summit

By Dianne Offett

In coordination with its 9th National CSE Training Conference, on September 13 OCSE convened an Interstate 2000 (I2K) Summit to identify initiatives and develop recommendations that states, tribes, and OCSE together might implement to improve interstate CSE operations in the year 2000. Held as a result of Commissioner Ross' commitment to improve interstate enforcement by making it the agency's number one priority in FY '98, the invitational Summit brought together 100 federal, state, local, and tribal representatives.

Participants shared ideas and discussed major interstate issues in a Town Hall-style plenary session. They also met in small, facilitated groups to discuss three topics related to interstate case processing and enforcement: case cleanup and maintenance, case processing and communication, and customer services. Discussions focused on procedures states use to review unworked interstate cases, how states can improve interstate communication, and the ways in which states can help each other provide better services to each other and to their customers.

Each group identified obstacles to interstate enforcement and shared "good ideas" that have helped in overcoming them. Sample good ideas included Michigan's case closure project—closing cases where there is no longer a need for service; Hawaii's use of telephonic hearings in interstate cases; and California's web page with an on-line case status inquiry feature.

OCSE staff highlighted good ideas submitted by states and local child support enforcement agencies through their Regional Interstate Liaisons. States will be able to access good ideas through OCSE's website under the National Electronic Child Support Resources System.

One of several events that OCSE is planning in support of its Interstate 2000 commitment, the Summit provided a forum for participants to meet, network, and share ideas with colleagues. Our hope is that every jurisdiction will join with us in making this commitment.

If you would like to know more about interstate good ideas or technical assistance, or other I2K initiatives, contact Dianne Offett at (202) 401-5425. □

Dianne Offett is OCSE's Interstate Liaison Officer

Survey of Food Stamp Program Participants Reveals What Customers Think

In OCSE's continuing efforts to provide customer service information of interest to the nation's child support community, we present a summary of a recent survey report entitled, *Customer Service in the Food Stamp Program*. Since the Food Stamp Program can be expected to have customers in common with child support, the findings may be relevant to us. Of particular interest, the survey includes information on monetary and nonmonetary costs to participate in the program, and on stigma associated with participating.

Customer Satisfaction with the Food Stamp Program

Overall, the findings indicate that participating households are pleased with the services provided by the program. Most Food Stamp households were satisfied with the application, recertification, and issuance processes, with the performance of their caseworkers, and with the Food Stamp Program's services overall. However, 10 to 20 percent of customers expressed some dissatisfaction, depending on the measure. In general, dissatisfied households, compared to satisfied households, are:

- More likely to be in urban areas and have low monthly Food Stamp benefits;
- More likely to feel stigma associated with program participation; and
- More likely to incur higher participation costs, as measured by the time and out-of-pocket costs of applying for or being recertified for benefits.

Monetary and Nonmonetary Costs of Participation

The average application involves nearly five hours of customer time, including at least two trips to the Food Stamp office or other places. Recertification requires two and a half hours and at least one trip to the office. The average out-of-pocket monetary cost to apply for benefits is about $10.31, or six percent of the average monthly benefit. Recertifications, which usually occur once or twice each year, cost $5.84, or four percent of the monthly benefit. Most of the costs are for transportation.

Reasons Some Who Are Eligible Do Not Participate

About three-quarters of nonparticipating households estimated to be eligible said they were not aware that they were eligible for the Food Stamp Program. Interestingly, most nonparticipating householders who had applied or participated in the past also reported being unaware of their eligibility.

Among those nonparticipants who believed they were eligible, the most important reasons for not applying for benefits were time, cost of traveling to the Food Stamp office, or a belief that they did not need food stamps.

While not usually expressed directly, perceptions of stigma decreased participation by eligibles. Although only seven percent of eligible nonparticipants mentioned a stigma-related factor as their most important reason for not participating, nearly half answered affirmatively to at least one of the survey questions about stigma. After controlling for factors such as benefits size and household composition, eligible householders who associated higher levels of stigma with receiving and using food stamps were less likely to participate. □

The survey was conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Princeton, New Jersey, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services.

Notices of Proposed Rulemaking Published

Two Notices of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) have recently been published in the Federal Register. The first (64 FR 39073) would implement performance-based incentive funding and performance-based penalty systems for states' child support programs and would also establish standards for certain types of audits.

The second (64 FR 55102) concerns state self-assessment reports. This proposed rule would implement a provision of the Social Security Act added by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which requires each state to annually assess the performance of its own child support enforcement program and to provide a report of the findings to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Consideration will be given to written comments received by December 7, 1999. Comments may be sent to: Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Washington D.C. 20447, Attention: Division of Policy and Planning, Office of Child Support Enforcement. □

USDA Expenditures on Children By Families

By Mark Lino

Since 1960, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided annual estimates of expenditures on children from birth through age 17. The most recent report, *Expenditures on Children by Families: 1998 Annual Report*, presents the latest child rearing estimates in 1998 dollars. These estimates are used by states in setting child support guidelines and foster care payments.

The estimates are provided for husband-wife and single parent families for the U.S. overall. To account for price differentials and varying patterns of expenditures, the child-rearing expense estimates for husband-wife families are also provided for urban areas in four regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West) and for rural areas throughout the U.S. Because of sample size limitations, the estimates for single parent families are provided only for the U.S. overall.

Expenditures on children are estimated for the major budgetary components: housing, food, transportation, clothing, health care, child care and education, and miscellaneous goods and services. For husband-wife families, estimated expenses on a child in a two-child family vary considerably by income level. Depending on the age of the child, the annual expenses range:

- From $5,950 to $7,820 for families in the lowest income group (1998 before-tax income less than $36,000);
- From $8,240 to $9,340 for families in the middle income group (1998 before-tax income between $36,000 and $60,600); and
- From $12,260 to $13,310 for families in the highest income group (1998 before-tax income more than $60,600).

Expenditures on a child by single-parent families were similar to those of husband-wife families. The major difference between the two groups was in the income distribution. Thirty-three percent of husband-wife families were in the lower income group (1998 before-tax income less than $36,000) compared with 83 percent of single-parent families. Also, the estimates for single parent families only cover out-of-pocket child-rearing expenditures made by the parent who has the primary care of the child. Estimates of spending made by the parent without primary care, or by others such as grandparents, could not be determined from the data.

On average, households in the lowest income group spend 28 percent of before-tax income per year on a child; those in the middle-income group, 18 percent; and those in the highest income group, 14 percent. Regardless of income level, as a proportion of total child-rearing expenses, housing accounts for the largest share, while food is the second largest, and transportation the third. Overall, child-rearing expenses generally increase with the age of a child.

Even when 1960's spending is adjusted for inflation and converted into 1998 dollars, the expense of raising a child to age 18 has increased over the years: from $119,800 inflation adjusted in 1960 to $156,690 in 1998 for a middle-income husband-wife family. Child care is one of the major reasons for this increase. In 1960, child care expenses were negligible since many mothers were not in the labor force, but in 1998, they were among the largest expenditures made on preschool children by middle-income families.

To obtain a free copy of the report, contact the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at (202) 208-2417. The report may also be downloaded from the Home Page of the Center at: www.usda.gov/cnpp ☐

Mark Lino, Ph.D., is an Economist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

About Mark Lino . . .

By Elaine Peay

Mark Lino has a special concern for the well being of children. When I approached him about preparing an article for *Child Support Report* on an aspect of his research, he quickly volunteered to prepare a summary of his Department's 1998 *Annual Report on Expenditures on Children by Families*. A native of Boston, Massachusetts, he completed his undergraduate work in economics at Boston College, before going on to Cornell University for a Ph.D. in consumer economics.

Dr. Lino has been with USDA for 10 years. His interests lie in the spending habits of average persons in particular, what their routine spending patterns are and how they tend to allocate their funds. In addition to expenditures on children, his research areas include the cost of a healthy diet and family economic well being. ☐

Currently with the Department of the Navy, Elaine Peay, a [illegible] Leadership Program, recently returned to ACF's Office of Public Affairs. Ms. Peay made the contacts with Dr. Lino and worked with him in the development of this article.

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Office of Child Support Enforcement
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Child Support Report

New Outreach Product Available

OCSE is pleased to announce the availability of a new product designed to help caseworkers, clients, and the general public stay informed about child support enforcement.

Federal Location and Collection Services is a brochure that presents the latest information on services offered by OCSE. It has removable inserts with detailed information on eight services: Federal Parent Locator Service; National Directory of New Hires; Federal Case Registry; External Locate Sources; Federal Tax Refund Offset Program; Administrative Offset Program; Multistate Financial Institution Data Match Program; [illegible] Program; and Passport Denial Program.

Many of these location tools and collection remedies are new or revised. Increased awareness of these multiple tools and remedies may encourage custodial parties to provide additional information concerning financial assets, Social Security numbers, and tax information about the putative father and/or noncustodial parent.

For a copy of the brochure, contact OCSE's National Resource Center at (202) 401-9383. For more information about OCSE's outreach products, contact Mike Turpy at mturpy@acf.dhhs.gov ☐

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David G.Ia Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David M. Engel

Editor, Phil Harman

ORDER/SUBSCRIPTION Information
[illegible]@acf.dhhs.gov

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Child Support Report

Office of Child Support Enforcement | Vol. XXI, No. 12, December 1999

OCSE Prepares for the Year 2000

We all have read about the potential for disruptive computer problems in business and government when the new millennium begins. No one can predict with absolute certainty the impact of the millennium change, but for the past two years OCSE has worked to make sure the transition to the Year 2000 (Y2K) is a smooth one for the nation's child support program.

No one can predict with absolute certainty the impact of the millennium change.

Our goal is for our information systems and programs to work properly, in order to guarantee the uninterrupted delivery of needed services to children and families. This effort has proceeded on several fronts.

Information Systems Repairs

In making repairs to OCSE information systems to make them Y2K-ready, we examined code to make sure it would properly handle Year 2000 dates. Repaired code was tested, and a contractor other than the system developer performed an Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) of the system. The IV&V reviews have been completed for all systems with which states and other federal agencies exchange data. The Social Security Administration (SSA), whose mainframes are used to house OCSE information systems, performed a further review of program code. SSA has taken a lead role among government agencies in the effort to provide a smooth transition to the Year 2000. Finally, we installed bridging software so that any two-digit dates received from partners who have not completed Y2K repairs will be accurately interpreted and not lead to rejection of data.

Systems Testing

Working with SSA, OCSE systems were forward-date tested by advancing the clock on the SSA mainframes into the Year 2000 and operating OCSE systems to make sure they perform correctly. That testing, completed earlier this year, was successful. In addition, we have performed end-to-end testing of the Federal Parent Locator Service by receiving, processing, and returning Y2K data from and to the Department of the Interior.

Business Continuity and Contingency Plans (BCCPs)

These plans deal with unanticipated system problems and provide alternate procedures for continued service while system problems are fixed. They were tested in November and early December to make sure the plans

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

My View

David Gray Ross

It is now six years since I became Commissioner of the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. During that time, child support's impact on our nation's families has grown considerably. Largely through your efforts, collections have increased by 80 percent and the establishment of paternities has more than doubled. Just as important, we have seen real progress in changing the culture of the child support program, making it more inclusive and welcoming to those who would like to share the struggle with us.

Collaborating with other ACF programs has been a particular interest of mine during my tenure as OCSE Commissioner.

Collaborating with other ACF programs has been a particular interest of mine during my tenure as OCSE Commissioner. We are partnering, to varying degrees, with Child Care, Child Welfare, Community Services, Developmental Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Family Assistance, and Head Start—encouraging these programs to tell their customers about the benefits of child support.

The Head Start program offers a particularly good example of collaboration. In 1996, the Head Start Bureau and OCSE issued a joint letter encouraging all Head Start programs to promote child support services for their eligible single parents.

In 1998 legislative reauthorization of Head Start made promoting child support services a mandatory function of every Head Start agency, and the National Head Start Association and OCSE entered into an agreement to work together to promote local partnerships between Head Start programs and child support offices.

In 1999, the Head Start Bureau issued an Information Memorandum to each of its program offices on "Preventing Child Support Services for Head Start Families." Now, Head Start programs increasingly invite state and local child support staff to speak to their staff and parents on the benefits of child support services, while local and state child support staff regularly conduct workshops and speak on child support at national, regional and state Head Start meetings.

My point in citing these achievements is to indicate the opportunity that exists for child support workers to extend a hand in partnership to Head Start. Many child support offices already are collaborating in a variety of ways, but if you, as the director of a state or local child support office, haven't as yet reached out to Head Start, I urge you to do so. I assure you that Head Start staff will welcome your interest and that the partnership will produce good things for America's children and families.

My point in citing these achievements is to indicate the opportunity that exists for child support workers to extend a hand in partnership to Head Start.

My thanks once again to all of you in the child support family for your commitment to children and your faithfulness in service. Best wishes for a joyful holiday season and for success—personal and professional—in the New Year. □

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New Federal Rules to Enforce Health Care Coverage in Child Support Orders

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala has announced a proposed rule to make it easier for children to get health insurance coverage through their noncustodial parents.

The regulation creates a standard form to enforce child support agreements that require noncustodial parents to provide for their children's health care needs.

> *"Having a simple and standard means to obtain health insurance from noncustodial parents is so important."*
>
> —HHS Secretary Donna Shalala

The proposed implementing provisions of the Child Support Performance and Incentives Act of 1998, "[the Administration is committed to exploring every opportunity to increase the number of children with health insurance," Secretary Shalala said. "Even many uninsured children, private insurance is available through their parents, but it can sometimes be difficult for employers to enforce medical support orders after a separation or divorce. That's why having a simple and standard means to obtain health insurance from noncustodial parents is so important."

The proposed rule, published in the Federal Register (1-15-99), provides for a uniform manner for states to inform employers about their need to enroll noncustodial parents' children in employer-sponsored health plans. The regulation also establishes a standardized National Medical Support Notice, modeled on the existing standardized income withholding form, to make it simpler and easier for employers to enforce medical support orders.

The Department of Labor (DOL) also has issued proposed regulations that provide guidance to the administrators of group health plans to which noncustodial parents may be enrolled as eligible for enrollment. DOL's guidance provides the information necessary for health plan administrators to accept the National Medical Support Notice as a "qualified medical child support order" (QMCSO).

Medical support orders, which require noncustodial parents to include their children under their health insurance coverage, are established and enforced by state child support enforcement agencies. Currently, nearly 60 percent of the $14.3 billion a year in child support payments to 17 million families is collected through income withholding by employers. □

Births to High School Girls Fall to 40-Year Low

Births to teen-agers fell for the seventh straight year in 1998, with the rate of births to those of high school age hitting a 40-year low. Overall, births to teens ages 15 to 19 dropped by 2 percent from 1997 and by 16 percent from 1991 through 1998.

Births to those in the 15 to 17 age groups fell 4 percent to 30.4 births for every 1,000 teens. That rate has dropped 21 percent since 1991 when it was 38.7 births and is now at the lowest rate in at least four decades.

Analysts point to a number of reasons for the drop. Surveys show that fewer teens are having sex and that teens also are using more reliable forms of birth control, including long-lasting implants and injections. Fear of AIDS has increased use of condoms.

> *Between 1991 and 1997, teen-age birth rates fell in every state, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands.*

Between 1991 and 1997, teen-age birth rates fell in every state, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. The drops were statistically significant everywhere except for Rhode Island and Guam. The declines exceeded 30 percent in 16 states and the District of Columbia. □

Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Good Relations with Employers in Virginia

By Mary Ann Dressler

Through wage withholding, employers account for more than 40 percent of all nationwide child support collections. In Virginia, we have found that building good relationships with employers is good for business. The cooperation of employers is simply too important for child support agencies to take for granted.

To be most useful, relationships need to be developed and maintained with the employer community at both a local and statewide level. Whether it's a formal presentation before a large employer group or a single conversation with a payroll clerk, outreach is important to success. Each contact with the employer community is an opportunity to market the importance of child support and the crucial role that employers play in collecting support for children and families.

In Virginia, we have 22 district offices throughout the State. Each is committed to developing strong relationships with the employers in its geographic area. A personal contact with an employer can help promote a concept of teamwork between the child support office and the employer, ensuring that child support remains a priority deduction and bolstering compliance with new-hire reporting and wage withholding.

The development of good relationships with employers in Virginia has yielded some notable results. For example:

- During a recent strike of 5,000 United Steel Workers of America at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, our relationship with shipyard personnel enabled us to continue to collect child support payments from strike benefits;
- A positive relationship with The * employment Union yielded payoffs in May and November when vacation and Christmas bonuses were paid; and
- A large textile operation notified the child support office of all severance packages it paid to displaced workers when a part of its manufacturing process relocated to another state. This timely notification enabled us to obtain a portion of the funds for child support.

As these examples show, when employers understand the impact that regularly paid child support has on children and families they are willing to do their share and more. If you would like additional information, contact Mary Ann Dressler at (703) 356-6558. ☐

Mary Ann Dressler is District Manager of the Portsmouth, Virginia, Child Support Office.

Atlanta Falcons Team Up With Georgia Child Support

Two football season, posters of the Atlanta Falcons' Chris Chandler, Jessie Tuggle, and Ray Buchanan, with their children, will highlight their roles as fathers. In conjunction with Georgia Child Support Enforcement's statewide Responsible Fatherhood Campaign, these photos will appear on billboards and posters in cities across the State throughout the football season. The campaign goal is to encourage young fathers to follow the example of responsible fatherhood provided by these well-known and successful athletes. ☐

First Things First in South Carolina

By Kathy Brazell

South Carolina's Department of Social Services' Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) introduced its First Things First public awareness campaign early in 1999, with a goal of changing the attitudes of young people about child bearing. The intent is to encourage young people between the ages of 15 and 20 to have children only after they achieve certain other goals first. The campaign's focus is on getting educated, employed, and married before having children. First things first.

Endorsed by South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges and State Department of Education Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum, the campaign includes vigorous media outreach. Two television commercials were broadcast statewide, outreach sessions were held in local social service offices and in churches and schools, materials were disseminated statewide, and advertising was placed on movie theater screens across the state.

Middle school students demonstrate positive attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors about the importance of education, planning for the future, and completing an education before getting married.

To measure the effectiveness of the campaign, CSED contracted for a front-end baseline survey of middle school children and parents prior to any release of media. The purpose was to obtain baseline data against which attitudes could be tracked prior to and after exposure to the campaign, thus measuring its effectiveness in changing knowledge, decisions, and attitudes and to obtain information about the attitudes of students and parents toward components of the campaign, which could assist in planning programs and developing media for adolescents. Student and parent questionnaires were designed to assess 1) attitudes about goal setting, marrying before having children, and the importance of an education and role, 2) where students go to get help with problems and advice about planning for the future, and 3) where students are exposed to positive messages and what sources they trust.

Two hundred forty-one students completed the questionnaires, with girls outnumbering boys 58 to 42 percent. Half the students were in the sixth grade, with the other half split between seventh and eighth graders. Two hundred fifty-eight parents also completed the questionnaire.

The results show these middle school students demonstrating positive attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors about the importance of education, planning for the future, and completing an education before getting married. Overall, the students agree with and support the main message in the *First Things First* campaign: take care of the important things first.

Other findings: ninth graders communicate with their parents more and place more importance on being married before having children than do seventh and eighth graders. For sources of support and advice, middle school students rely mainly on their parents, putting mothers first and fathers second. Teachers play an important role, second only to mothers, in terms of advice about problems at school. Parents and teachers come in well ahead of TV in terms of messages middle students receive about staying in school, not becoming teenage parents, and planning for the future.

Results from the parents' survey show that parents communicate with their children about the importance of goal setting, education, and having a job before marrying. They also communicate with their children about what it is like to be a parent and the difficulties teenage parents face.

Beginning in September, CSED began to revisit the schools across the state with a follow-up survey for students and parents. This survey will determine to what extent the media campaign has been successful in reaching its target audience and in positively affecting attitudes about goal setting and responsible behavior. Additional follow-up will include a second television commercial which will air statewide, a brochure for parents, with a message on how they can best communicate the *First Things First* message to their children, and continued outreach sessions throughout the state.

If you would like more information about this campaign or a copy of the survey results, contact Kathy Brazell at (803) 898-9106.

Kathy Brazell is Project Administrator for the Child Support Enforcement Division of the SC Department of Social Services.

Technology Based Training

By Dale Hoese

The Instructor Lesson Design (ILD) for Technology Based Training (TBT) course was developed to augment the efforts of OCSE's National Training Center in the development of CD-ROMs and Web-based training design. The ILD is essentially a translation of the ISD course "I-D Process" into computer based training format. The I-D process encompasses Diagnosing (assessing), Designing, Developing, Delivering, and Documenting the differences (evaluating).

The objective of the course is to enable participants throughout the child support enforcement community to analyze, design, and develop storyboards that contain the training content for course delivery in a technology based format, including Internet, CD-ROM, etc.

ILD training is directed at both trainers and technology developers. During the pilot conducted in August 1999, evaluations were very positive. Trainers and technologists in attendance said the course was exactly what they needed and clearly showed how and when both parties need to do in their work together to produce effective technology based training products. In the training, participants were able to apply their newly learned skills to products they were currently developing for their states.

> *This training will significantly enhance the capability of regions and states to work with any form of technology-enhanced training delivery and make it more effective, cheaper, and quicker.*

During the 9th National CSE Training Conference in September, we conducted an ILD for TBT workshop. In this workshop, we provided an overview of the training course. We also discussed the evaluations from participants and reviewed the ways in which this course can enhance the training capabilities of our state partners.

Why is the ILD for TBT course important to CSE? Because this training will significantly enhance the capability of regions and states to work with any form of technology enhanced training delivery and make it more effective, cheaper, and quicker.

The National Training Center plans to offer ILD for TBT training at the Regional Hubs or a Regional Office within the Hub. State trainers and technologists who are interested in taking this course should contact the CSE Training Liaison in their Region. Class size will be limited to 16 participants, so sign up as soon as possible. The first training class will be held in Seattle, Washington, for that Hub's States. No dates have as yet been set for the classes, but they will occur between January and June 2000. For more information, contact Charlene Butler at (301) 443-3491. ☐

Dale Hoese is a Program Manager at the IV-D Child Support Office in Washington, DC. With the OCSE National Training Center's Charlene Butler, he is the Project Officer for this project.

OCSE's National Training Center: Ready for the Millennium

By Michele Ogburn

As we move into a new century, OCSE's National Training Center (NTC) is ready with an array of modern technology to meet the child support program's training needs. Currently available: an computer-based training courses, Web-based training on OCSE's Homepage, and a management training course for IV-D directors and their executive staff. In the new year, NTC will provide training to help states develop their own CBT and Web-based training, convert the child support orientation CBT course (child support 101) to Web-based and continue to provide Training of Trainer (TOT) course deliveries.

In addition, the National CSE Training Work Group, which is comprised of state, federal, and association members and works closely with NTC, now has a new Workroom on the Internet, enabling Work Group members and NTC staff to communicate quickly and effectively regarding training activities and plans.

I am very proud of what has been accomplished by staff in the National Training Center, and we look forward to continuing a high level of support to the child support training community. If you have training needs or suggestions for courses, please let us know. Yvette Riddick, Chief of the National Training Center, can be reached at (301) 443-4885. ☐

Michele Ogburn is the Director of OCSE's Division of State and Local Assistance, in which the National Training Center is located.

Fathers Matter

Fathers—all fathers, no matter what their income or cultural background—can play a critical role in their children's education. Research shows that when fathers are involved, their children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behavior. Even when fathers do not share a home with their children, their active involvement can have a lasting and positive impact.

On October 28, DHHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala and Education Secretary Richard W. Riley hosted a live interactive satellite broadcast on the importance of involving fathers in children's learning. The program, a kick-off event for DHHS/Education collaboration on this issue, offered strategies for making schools and family service programs more welcoming to parents, developing family-friendly policies at work, encouraging support for fathers' roles in education, and providing professional development for those who work with children and families.

Topics included the benefits of fathers' involvement in children's learning; ways for fathers to be involved from the prenatal stage through high school and beyond; challenges to fathers' involvement, including work demands, cultural barriers, literacy needs, etc.; and best practices in schools, early learning environments, universities, and communities. Additional DHHS/Education events and publications on fathers will be forthcoming.

For more information, visit the DHHS website at fatherhood.hhs.gov; Education's website at www.pfie.ed.gov; or call 1-877-4EDPUBS.

Y2K

Continued from page 1.

are complete and that staff who are involved in their implementation understand their roles and responsibilities.

Day One Plans

Day One refers to the time immediately before and after January 1, 2000. Working again with SSA, on January 1 we will run batch processes of some state data to verify that it is being processed correctly. With other program offices in ACF we are staffing a Coordinated Response Center (CRC). The CRC will monitor the transition period through contact with our federal and state partners and will if necessary activate BCCPs. The CRC will begin operation on December 28 and will remain in operation at least through January 7, 2000.

Further details on Day One and how to contact the CRC will be posted on the ACF web site (http://y2k.acf.dhhs.gov). In addition, a Y2K Help Desk has been established and can be reached at 1-888-HHS-Y2K1.

State Partners

We have worked closely with our state partners to help them get their own systems, plans, and procedures ready for the Year 2000. Focusing on information systems and BCCPs, ACF recently completed assessments of the readiness of all the states and territories. Reports of findings were distributed to states, along with recommendations for corrective actions. States responded positively to the assessments. A number of them indicated that the assessments helped give greater priority and support to their Year 2000 efforts.

ACF followed up by offering technical assistance to states whose programs were found to be at risk because system repairs were behind schedule or BCCPs were incomplete. Two-day BCCP training seminars were held and special trips made to states that needed more comprehensive assistance.

The Year 2000 represented a unique challenge. Until the transition actually takes place, we will not know for certain if all our preparations have been 100 percent successful. But we are confident that the efforts we have made in OCSE and with our partners will smooth the transition to the new millennium and ensure the continued delivery of critically needed services to our nation's children and families.□

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Division of Consumer Services
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Child Support Report

Military Paydays

The following are military paydays for the balance of FY 2000 for active duty personnel.

Pay Period	Payday
December 1999	30 December 1999
January 2000	*1 February 2000*
February 2000	1 March 2000
March 2000	*31 March 2000*
April 2000	1 May 2000
May 2000	*1 June 2000*
June 2000	30 June 2000
July 2000	*1 August 2000*
August 2000	1 September 2000
September 2000	*2 October 2000.*☐

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Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families
Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner, OCSE
David Gray Ross

Director, Division of Consumer Services
David H. Siegel

Editor, Phil Sharman

(202)401-4626 Fax(202)401-5559 Internet:
JSharman@acf.dhhs.gov

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